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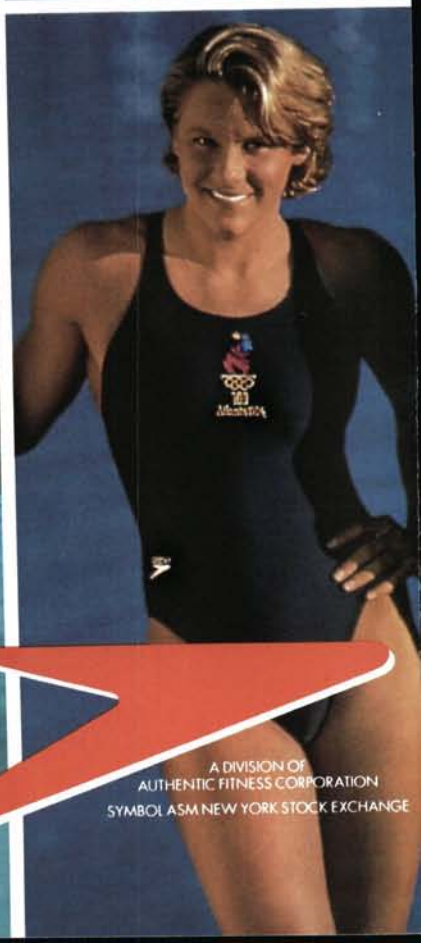

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

NOVEMBER 13, 1995

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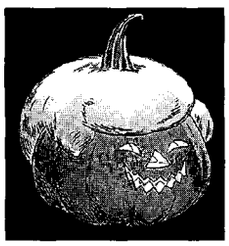

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CORRESPONDENCE

Multiple choice

To the editors:

My optimism about the increasing success of the reform movement within feminism got a big boost from Naomi Wolf's courageous essay on abortion ("Our Bodies, Our Souls," October 16). The country has moved steadily to the right because of the failure of liberals to engage in precisely this kind of searching re-examination of their conventionalized political positions. Those Democrats who hope, as I do, for the re-election of Bill Clinton should follow Wolf's lead. Thanks to the arrogant mishandling of the abortion issue by feminist leaders, we have lost far too much moral authority to religious conservatives, who have become the legitimate voice of millions of Americans ignored or belittled by the cultural elite.

CAMILLE PAGLIA
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Much of Naomi Wolf's argument rests on the premise that the fetus, even in the first or early second trimester, is an unborn baby that we should be regarding as a real person long before birth. But a beating heart, facial features "like Daddy" or responding to an outside stimulus, etc. do not mean that we know what the fetus "feels" or that it is a real person. Responding to stimuli in very purposeful-like ways can be accomplished by a spinal animal or human, with no brain or with the spinal cord severed from the brain.

Without an adequately functional brain there is no person. An adult individual with a dead forebrain becomes a candidate for "pulling the plug," even with a beating heart and reflex withdrawals of a limb if pinched. The fetal brain does not achieve the nerve cell arrangements and their interconnections that are necessary for the most minimal "personhood" attributes until well into the second trimester. An abortion before that time need not be regarded as the killing of a person, since there is no one "there" yet.

BENJAMIN LIBET
San Francisco, California

To the editors:

Naomi Wolf rightly alludes to contraception as the main defense against abortion. Yet, I would go one step further. Wolf does not discuss the issue of abstinence. The pro-life lobby stresses abstinence as the surest form of birth control. Guess what? They are right! We do ourselves a disservice when we refuse to discuss abstinence. Our various religious traditions all teach us that sex is confined to marriage. If we who profess to be pro-choice begin to teach abstinence to our youth, perhaps we can change the view of abortion from "a woman's right to choose" to an unfortunate necessity—a "crying shame." I emphasize the crying. Without grief, abortion strips us of our humanity.

JORDAN M. PARR
Augusta, Georgia

To the editors:

I read Naomi Wolf's article and wept. She articulated for me the root of my nagging sense of dissatisfaction with pro-choice activism. As a mother who has both defended clinics and been blessed to give birth to two welcomed children, I cannot subscribe to the theory that the fetus is merely tissue. However, I remain avowedly pro-choice because such a decision is too profound to make for anyone else. I join Wolf in reminding all women, and men, that choice is not only a right, but also an obligation to behave and choose wisely. In addition, I suggest that the enormous talents and energies currently put to work on both sides of the abortion debate would be better utilized in a coordinated effort to combat unwanted pregnancy, thereby making real improvements in everybody's lives without compromising the abortion morals of either side.

LYNNE LUEDERS
Los Angeles, California

To the editors:

As if abortion rights advocates didn't have enough to worry about, what with murderous fanatics, far-right lawmakers and an insufficient number of abortion providers, along comes "pro-choice" Naomi Wolf, advising the movement to "mourn the evil that is abortion" and adopt a "paradigm of sin and redemption." Add in her intemperate pronouncements that disadvantaged women facing an unwanted pregnancy may have an "obligation" to abort while women of means have "no excuse whatsoever for their carelessness," and one questions her definition of choice. Thanks, but we'd rather grapple with enemies we know than so-called friends in Wolf's clothing.

Among many fallacies and confusions, the most egregious appear, curiously, when Wolf speaks from experience. Equating the use of postcoital contraception with abortion, she then berates her choice of "Me" over "Baby"—an odd label for what by definition was pre-embryonic. Avoiding pregnancy is "analogous to draft evasion," she says, lament-

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ing that "I chose to sidestep biology"—as if the ability to separate biology from destiny, sought by women for millennia and achieved only a generation ago, were a curse and not one of humankind's greatest achievements. In Wolf's moral(istic) paradigm, should every act of nonreproductive intercourse be followed by self-flagellation and remorse over "the being that might have been"?

Her view that there are good and bad reasons for abortion is profoundly disrespectful of the moral agency of women. She unwisely extrapolates from her own "selfish" choice to the choices of all. Yet if there were any validity to her own careful examination of options, circumstances and goals, other women's engagements with conscience are equally valid. Every woman's decision about abortion is a moral decision.

JANE M. JOHNSON
Interim co-president
Planned Parenthood
New York, New York

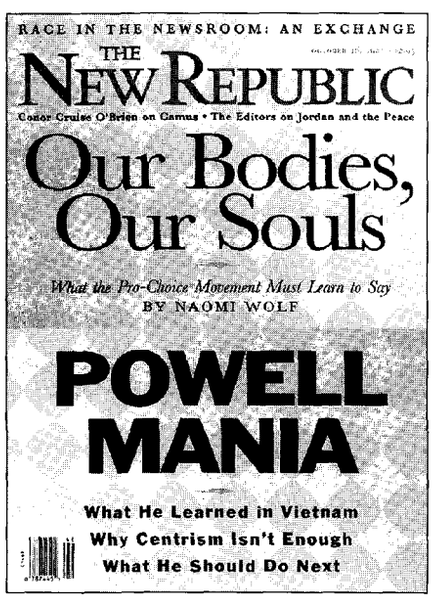
Naomi Wolf replies:

Jane M. Johnson misreads me so assiduously that her letter is a disappointment to those of us who are pro-choice and long for a more open and nuanced debate within our own movement. As she must know, I do not hold the repulsive view that she attributes to me—that disadvantaged women have an "obligation" to choose abortion; rather, I recognize that there are many circumstances in which many women, particularly those with few economic choices, have to honor their responsibilities to their own lives over the potential lives of others. I do not equate the morning-after pill with abortion or "lament" my having sidestepped biology. As she must know, the passage in which I describe my own decision to avert a potential pregnancy—a decision I would make again in the same circumstances—made the simple point that it is a falsehood to say that "to be a better mother" is the only reason women choose abortion. Most disturbingly, she, like other critics, has me condemning "women" when throughout the piece I carefully hold men at least as accountable for our inexcusably high abortion rate as women. She rejects my view that there are "good" and "bad" (or, more accurately, better and worse) reasons for abortion. To be consistent, she would have to maintain that the affluent adults who have to abort because they couldn't be bothered to roll over and dig a condom out of a drawer are the moral equivalent of the 13-year-olds in the housing project who have to abort because they don't know how to find, afford or use a condom; that the man who has unsafe sex with no concern for his partner's health or well-being, thus bringing about an abortion, is the moral equivalent of the man who impregnates his partner despite having done everything he possibly could to protect her; that a six-week abortion brought about because a couple confronted their situation is morally equivalent to a six-month abortion brought about by denial; that we have no moral feelings about the Chinese practice of aborting fetuses simply because they are female. Can she—and we—any longer support such a limited and contradictory worldview? It is time to move beyond it.

Westbindung

To the editors:

Jacob Heilbrunn's piece "Springtime" (October 16) conjures up the image of a "revisionist" Germany intent on reverting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BY NAOMI WOLF
POWELL MANIA
What He Learned in Vietnam
Why Centrism Isn't Enough
What He Should Do Next

to old ways such as *Griff nach der Weltmacht* and the domination of Europe by means of economic power, or, as Heilbrunn in rather bad German puts his case, from *Weltpolitick* to *Geldpolitik*. Heilbrunn's analysis is replete with inaccuracies. For example, Heilbrunn perceives in the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition's acceptance of the French offer to discuss a "coordinated deterrence" based on the French nuclear capability as a German will to gain a finger on a nuclear trigger. This is simply false. Germany has on countless occasions and in several international agreements committed itself not to acquire NBC weapons of its own or to control those of others. Not only could the governing coalition not reject this basic revision of French national security policy for fear of offending a major European friend and ally, as have the SPD and the *Bundnis 90/die Gruenen*, but also the issue is not a German finger on the French *force de frappe* but rather German participation in target planning similar to its participation in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group. A similar misrepresentation applies to almost all examples of German political and economic actions cited in the essay. One rather minor mistake is grating on an American who lives here in Berlin. Heilbrunn states that the only landmark-type historic resource associated with the American presence in Berlin, 1945-1984, is a small museum in Dahlem. He fails to note that the museum is located on a major thoroughfare which bears the name Clayallee, that the square in front of the former West Berlin City Hall is called John F. Kennedy Square, that the Free University renamed its clinic and school of medicine and dentistry Benjamin Franklin as a tribute and thank you, the Airlift Memorial in front of Tempelhof Central Airport, and on through a long list of other public reminders of the American presence in West Berlin. More egregious is his failure to even mention the most important and lasting memorial to our presence for almost half a century in this country, namely, the German constitution, *das Grundgesetz*, in the writing of which the United States played an instrumental role, and its total acceptance by the overwhelming majority of contemporary Germans including those living in the new federal states of the former German Democratic Republic. We have no reason whatsoever to mistrust the reunited Germany, which save for small but vocal and articulate minorities on both the old left and the new right is firmly committed to its Westbindung.

JAMES SHEIRE
Berlin, Germany

Political science

To the editors:

Contrary to Robert Wright's TRB ("Some Like It Hot," October 9) Republicans have not uniformly opposed environmental measures. Representative Jim Saxton of New Jersey and I led the fight against weakening the Clean Water Act. We would have won if so many Democrats had not turned their backs on environmental protection. Along with Louis Stokes of Ohio, I led the fight against legislative riders that would limit the EPA's enforcement powers. We actually won that vote, and only lost a revote because, as *The Washington Post* pointed out, some Democrats were absent.

The divide in the House over environmental issues tends to be as much regional as partisan. Simply stigmatizing the Republican Party as anti-environment oversimplifies the political dynamics.

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Reaganomics, RIP

Return, for a moment, to December 18, 1980. On that evening, David Stockman, who had been recently nominated to be director of the Office of Management and Budget in the Reagan administration, dined at the Century Club in New York with leading supply-siders, including Jude Wanniski and Lew Lehrman. According to Stockman's 1986 memoir, *The Triumph of Politics*, Jude Wanniski harshly criticized him for his assurances to Wall Street that the enormous Reagan tax cuts would be paid for by equally substantial budget cuts. Wanniski denounced this approach as "root-canal" Republicanism, defined as "threatening to heave widows and orphans into the snow." The supply-siders believed that massive tax cuts would pay for themselves, so there was no need to cut the budget in order to balance the deficit.

They were wrong, of course. The architects of Reaganomics preserved a political alliance between the rich and the middle class—but only at the price of running up huge deficits. A decade and a half later, a new breed of Republicans is not going to repeat that mistake. They are determined to cut taxes for the rich and balance the budget—by curbing entitlements and raising taxes on the middle class and the poor. On the Republican Hill, orphan-heaving is in.

According to the congressional Joint Taxation Committee—a nonpartisan body now controlled by the Republicans—under the tax package approved by the Senate Finance Committee on October 19, about half of all American families, those making up to $30,000 a year, would pay higher taxes. The reason is a cutback in the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers. Republicans complain about the characterization in the reduction of the EITC as a "tax increase." But why? Many low-income workers will pay higher taxes if the Republican budget passes into law. If the Clinton administration proposed to reduce depreciation allowances for businesses while denying it was increasing taxes you can bet your bottom dollar that Hill Republicans would howl like coyotes.

There is a case, to be sure, for reforming the EITC. The growth in the number of fraudulent claims inspired Congress a few years ago to pass reforms that accidentally created a "marriage penalty" (a two-earner couple in some circumstances can now save more taxes if they are unmarried). But the importance of the EITC in helping low-income Americans—it now rivals Food Stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and exceeds Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) as a proportion of the federal budget—means that it should be fixed, not slashed.

While the bottom half of the American population will pay higher taxes under the Republican plan, the wealthy will get most of the tax savings. The top 12 percent of households will get almost half of the $43 billion tax cut approved by the Senate, according to a Treasury estimate. Citizens for Tax Justice, a liberal watchdog group, estimates that seven of ten families would pay the same, or higher, taxes as a result of the Senate plan. For 13 million middle- and low-income families, taxes would go up by an average of $300 a year, while the 1 percent of families with a household income of $606,000 would pay $7,245 a year less. Mind you, this is under the Senate plan, which is a model of fiscal probity and social equity compared to the more radical budget that is pending in the House. Under the House budget, according to CTJ, the richest 1 percent would get twice the tax savings.

Back in 1980, Stockman, on behalf of the Reagan administration, made a promise to William Greider in an interview: "We are going to attack weak claims, not weak clients." Today Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole are attacking weak clients, not weak claims. According to an estimate by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, poor Americans, although they receive only 21 percent of the federal budget, will see spending for their benefit cut by 37 to 47 percent. Meanwhile, many of the weakest claims of recipients of corporate welfare are being satisfied by the Republican Congress. The Republican war on big government has exempted the $5 billion annual tax expenditure that takes the form of the deduction of half the cost of "business meals and entertainment." Somehow the same Congress that cannot find enough money for the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor sees nothing wrong with subsidizing fancy meals and box seats for corporate executives, bankers, lawyers and realtors. The House has actually approved a 29 percent *increase* in the Agriculture Department's market promotion program that gives companies like McDonald's cash grants to help them advertise in foreign countries. (I for one will be looking for a grateful Ronald McDonald in the crowd at the '96 Republican Convention.)

All of this proves that those who accuse Gingrich and Dole of reviving Reaganomics are just wrong. This is not feel-good Reaganomics. It is root-canal economics without even a whiff of nitrous oxide. The Republican budgeteers are to equitable and reasonable government finance what Steve Martin's drugged-out, sadistic dentist in *Little Shop of Horrors* was to the orthodontics profession.

The Republicans have had a majority in Congress for less than a year. In that short time, they have done more to caricature the GOP as the party of the top-hatted Monopoly Man than any number of opponents in the center and the left could have done. What generations of Marxist propaganda failed to do—namely, convince the middle class that they as well as the poor are being abused by the political agents of the rich and the business class—the Republicans are on the verge of accomplishing by their own shortsighted strategy.

Maybe the architects of the Republican budget are really the last Soviet sleeper agents—trained long ago to seize power and provoke a left-wing backlash by identifying the Republican Party completely with well-heeled enemies of the middle class. (There's an airport thriller here—*The Gingrich Factor*, maybe, or *The Dole Salient*.) Or maybe we are simply watching the party of the rich running amok—Spring Break for CEOs and trust-fund babies. The spectacle can only help drive angry middle Americans toward the opposition—including independents, perhaps, as well as the Democrats. Ironically, by vetoing the Republican budget President Clinton may save the Republican Party from its own folly. Maybe he should let it pass into effect. A few more budgets like this, paying for tax cuts for the wealthy by tax increases on the bottom half of the population, and the GOP may provoke what some of us have only dreamed of: an alliance of the middle and the bottom against the molly-coddled top.

MICHAEL LIND

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 13, 1995

TRICK OR TREAT?

For reasons both personal and ideological, it's enormously attractive to take a tough and clear position on the Gingrich revolution: for or against. Conservative triumphalists and what's left of the liberal punditocracy need such an emotional crutch. The public, in contrast, seems predictably fickle: eager to blame any politician in power, to support a general war against the deficit and to oppose any possible cuts in their own entitlements. Our own view is that today's conservative "revolution" is more respectable and complex than the bogus revolution of the 1980s, and therefore deserves a more respectable and complex critique. The easy pleasure of Reagan-bashing is no longer an option. And it would be irresponsible to deny that, in broad terms, the assaults on the post-Reagan deficit and the post-Wright Congress are worthwhile. Still, when it gets to specifics there's also plenty that's unnecessary, and positively harmful. It's a strange mixture, still in flux, but one worth assessing closely. Here goes.

The Deficit. Two and a half cheers. Compare Gingrich to Reagan. Government grew under the Gipper in absolute numbers and remained a constant percentage of GDP. Yes, the levels of federal income tax went down slightly, but such reductions were largely compensated by hikes in the Social Security tax and in local and state taxes. At decade's end, few felt the difference in their paycheck. When Reagan left Washington, it was grossly in debt, but still very much there. From the Appalachian Regional Commission to the WIC program, the capital survived. Gingrich has done better. When the balanced budget amendment mercifully failed earlier this year, many Democrats sardonically predicted that the GOP would be shown incapable of submitting a balanced budget. They were merely projecting. John Kasich's bid to end the deficit in seven years is a credible one; it even prodded Clinton into offering a balanced budget plan of his own.

Washington. Yes, Gingrich deserves credit for real reform of the congressional process. Tom Foley and George Mitchell, although they seem like answers to Trivial Pursuit questions now, are not mere footnotes in history. Their painful defense of the congressional status quo helped fuel the resentment against Washington that elevated Ross Perot, helped elect the 1994 Congress and, perhaps, in 1997, will inaugurate a Rorschach president Powell. As early as 1990, with the fervor over congressional pay raises dominating talk radio, Mitchell and Foley should have seen the storm brewing. But they tried to ride it out. Gingrich knew that voters, more than anything, were angry at Washington in general and Congress in particular. And so his Contract did much to address their dismay: he dismantled the old committee system. Instead of chairmanships being awarded like tenure, they are now rotated every six years. Liberals, who once railed against the entrenched power of segregationist Dixiecrat committee chairmen, had become chairmen themselves and failed to appreciate the irony.

Nevertheless, Washington's deepest corruption is still intact. Everyone in the capital hates the current regimen of financing electoral campaigns, whereby each senator and member of Congress must spend hours a day, tin cup in hand, courting political action committees and wealthy donors in order to pay off their pollsters and ad makers. Sam Nunn rightly decried this system upon his retirement. This past summer, at a New Hampshire rally, Gingrich shook hands with President Clinton and promised to do something about campaign finance reform. Since then, nada. Gingrich has yet to even meet with those appointed by the president to examine the issue.

The concern about money-politics is not the lament of dewy-eyed good-government types. It is the sentiment of the legitimately disgusted. Under Gingrich, Washing-

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ton's culture of lobbying has become even more blatantly corrupt. Industry lobbyists were literally drafted to write the GOP's regulatory reform and environmental legislation. Most recently, the American Medical Association finagled a heck of a deal for itself—a Medicare package that lets doctors be spared the roughest cost cutting in the necessary Medicare rollback. Under new rules, for instance, doctors will be allowed to refer patients to labs in which they have a vested interest—something that's now, thankfully, banned.

Devolution. One little nook in Medicare reform says a lot. Nursing home operators once had to abide by a slew of sensible safety regulations over things like when they could administer sedatives to elderly patients. No more. Under Gingrich's plan, nursing home regulations would be more or less erased. The states, argue the Gingrichites, will take up the slack. Why do we somehow doubt that the legislators and lobbyists in Trenton, Baton Rouge and Cheyenne will be slow to fill the void? Indeed, the entire thrust of "devolution" in this Congress is often misguided. Sending programs "back to the states" is sometimes smart. The welfare bill rightly encourages experimentation in an area where it is sorely needed. But it's no panacea, especially when the feds slash the overall level of spending. And—yes, we're going to say it—sometimes Washington knows best. We see no reason to fob Medicaid, the health program for the poor, off on state capitals in the form of anemic block grants. States are often less efficient and more corrupt than the feds, and some problems, national in scope, require national solutions. This is where Gingrichism is anachronistically ideological rather than sanely reformist. The sensible way to deal with government regulations, for example, is to reform them as the National Performance Review is attempting, rather than abolishing them wholesale.

Big Government. Well, they talk big. And many Great Society relics deserve to be eviscerated. Why not cut down on antiquated programs like rural electrification? Richard Lugar, the Indiana Republican, has led an energetic fight against farm subsidies that Democrats should join. Not enough, but a good deal better than Clinton ever delivered. And the GOP's stand on Medicare deserves applause, even though their $270 billion cut is clearly designed primarily to finance excessive tax cuts. No, this is not a retroactive endorsement of Ira Magaziner. There is all the difference in the world between the government curtailing its own open-ended spending commitments—and the government trying to fine-tune every aspect of a private system that is happily cutting costs on its own, thank you.

Still, the real villains of government largess—corporate welfare queens—have been left largely untouched. And the poor have been unfairly clobbered, most especially by the draconian cuts in Medicaid. Worse, they're attacking the Clinton administration's most solid achievement so far, the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, a sensible mechanism for letting working families eke out a living above the poverty level. It's worth retaining even—no, especially—because it does not benefit the middle class. It's also a critical measure to provide an incentive to move from welfare to work, something both Republicans and Democrats pay lip service to. Ditto the president's sensible reform of the student loan program: his direct lending idea ended a windfall for banks that made a killing on guaranteed student loans. And Clinton's national service program, AmeriCorps—while not the national salvation some have idealized—is still a worthwhile, non-bureaucratic way of funding private charity groups. None of these schemes breaks the bank; and they each do a little good. None should be sacrificed on the ideological altar of the right. Nor, for that matter, should the Office of Technology Assessment. This small agency does what government too often fails to do: it evaluates programs to determine whether they work or not. Is Gingrich opposed to that?

Taxation. Uh-oh. The Republicans are once again arguing that despite large budget deficits—certain to grow larger as boomers enter middle age and retirement—we are best off cutting taxes. The president, whose chameleon-like tendencies continue to astonish, also embraced the notion of tax cuts shortly after the GOP election. Clinton's cuts are, at least, targeted subsidies for education and training. The GOP's cuts are absurd. Their proposal of a $500 tax credit for children is to be spread among those who really need it and those who will take it to the childrens' aisle at Laura Ashley. The GOP fetish with cutting the capital gains tax is also regressive and loopy. The whole idea of tax reform, a hard-won triumph of the 1980s, was to treat all income the same, allowing the market to make rational choices about where to invest. But, bizarrely, messing with markets at the behest of Wall Street has become a matter of Republican dogma. Besides, in today's fiscal climate, with many spending cuts affecting the poor, tax cuts for the middle-class and wealthy are unconscionable. In our view, some taxes should even be raised—not least on our recklessly cheap gas.

In the coming showdown with the Newtoids, the president should keep several things in mind: he should not join forces with the irredentist Democrats in the Congress whose scare-Grandma tactics on Medicare present a case study in why they are in such steep decline. But he can and should fight for those achievements of which he can be rightly proud: the EITC expansion, education and training subsidies, Reinventing Government and AmeriCorps primary among them. If he has to compromise on tax cuts, he should do so only for those lower down the socioeconomic ladder. This seems to be the direction Clinton is going in: alternately playing the fiscal responsibility card and the social equality card. He's right on both.

The recent criticism of Clinton's uneven tacking to the right is, in fact, misplaced. It's the right political instinct, and the right policy instinct. The truth is, a truly radical center should aim both for greater fiscal rectitude *and* for greater economic equality. The Gingrichites can be outflanked on both. The president should go at it. •

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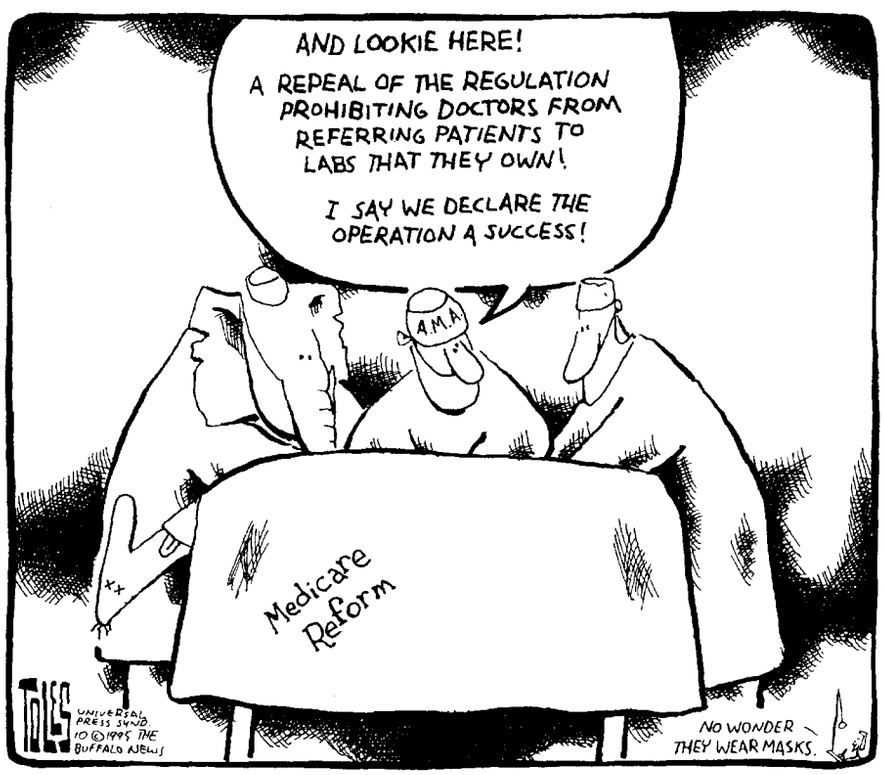
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Fidel Castro, snubbed by Bill Clinton while in New York for the U.N.'s 50th Anniversary Celebration, claimed he made brief eye contact with the president at a U.N. event.... Asked why leaders from Somalia did not attend a U.N. anniversary reception hosted by Clinton, a White House aide explained: "The dog ate their invitations." ... Thirty-five percent of Americans surveyed in a recent poll said they would support printing advertisements on dollar bills if it meant lower taxes.... Divine Brown expressed confidence that her "wicked Jewish lawyers" would clear her of prostitution charges.... A teenager in Pittsburgh shot a 38-year-old woman after allegedly mistaking her for a squirrel.... Three New Jersey high-school band members returned to school following their suspension for alleged anti-Semitism after their shouts of "oy" were mistaken for the punk slogan "Oi" at a school concert.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I SAY WE DECLARE THE OPERATION A SUCCESS!
A.M.A.
Medicare Reform
NO WONDER THEY WEAR MASKS.
TOLES
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MAKES YOU WANNA HOLLER: While *Washington Post* readers, used to the p.c. reporting of their paper, may not have been surprised by a glowing piece about the Million Man March the day before the rally, they might have been by the author. Calling the march "refreshing," Nathan McCall, a Metro reporter on leave, said he suspected some white complaints about Farrakhan were "a smoke screen to conceal their blanket contempt for any black man who attempts to lift us up." What the *Post* didn't tell readers, because McCall didn't tell the *Post*, is that he was hired by Farrakhan a year ago to write his autobiography. Sure, the piece ran in the opinion section, Outlook, but some declaration of interest would have been helpful. Outlook's editor, Jodie Allen, wishes McCall had told her: "I would have still used it, but pushed him in a different direction," Allen told us. "It could have been a more interesting story.... And I would have made it clear that they were working together." More interesting, given the *Post*'s almost manic belief in objective reporting—it barred reporters from participating in pro-choice rallies, for example—is why an exception is made for reporters who ghost-write for unapologetic racists.

HELEN WATCH: Of last year's class of mutinous GOP freshman, none bucks harder than Idaho's Helen Chenoweth. There probably isn't a single regulation from Washington she doesn't want squashed, particularly that pesky one governing illegal campaign contributions. Well, there's a method to her madness. Last July, the West One Bank of Idaho loaned Chenoweth $40,000 "on her signature only with no assured method of repayment," her treasurer told the Associated Press this week. At the time, she already owed nearly $100,000 and had less than $20,000 in her account, making her, by any standards, a bad credit risk. Those irksome FEC rules forbid banks to give special preference to borrowers. Any loans above $5,000 that fail this test are considered "illegal corporate contributions." Next term, watch out for that bill to abolish the FEC.

PRO-LEAVE: The October 25 issue of *The Hill* lists maternity leave policies of various members of Congress. Among the stingiest is Henry Hyde, avatar of the pro-life movement, who parses out twelve weeks of *unpaid* leave. Much more generous were the pro-choice Republicans, with Nancy Kassebaum at twelve weeks of paid leave and Nancy Johnson and John Chaffee at twelve weeks, six weeks paid. Hmmm.

UCRASS: The University of Massachusetts at Amherst took speech codes to a new level this week. A university ombudsman explained to campus groups that the new, broader policy was needed to target "general environmental harassment," and defines deviant speech as "material that serves to harass." The proposed code protects anybody from being offended in any way on the

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basis of "race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, veteran status, disability, citizenship, culture, HIV status, language, parental status, political affiliation or belief, and pregnancy status." There's one escape clause, however. Proponents of the code insist that invited speakers be exempted. Last year's most notable speech: a three-hour lecture by Louis Farrakhan.

WINDOW DRESSING: Last week, Speaker Gingrich took a pleasant stroll through Boys Town, the Nebraska orphanage he has touted as a model institution. "Orphanages are far better than having children driven into a lake, put in a dumpster or thrown out a window," he reassured the 550 boys. That same day in Washington, his acolytes in the House were stripping the welfare bill of any federal entitlements for adoption, foster care, or childrens' homes. Dumpsters, anyone?

THE MESSAGE TODAY IS, TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF, GET A JOB, WORK HARD, AND THEN...
...AND THEN WE'LL CUT YOUR EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT AND GIVE IT TO THE ALREADY WEALTHY.
MILLION MAN MARCH
TOLES
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CAN THE MESSENGERS BE SEPARATED FROM THAT MESSAGE?

TRAVELIN' MAN: A few months ago this magazine expressed doubt that much would come of the Kenneth Starr's Whitewater investigation. (See "Big Zit" by Matthew Cooper, September 4.) Still, we thought there might be something afoul in the travel office scandal. The latest House hearings only confirm our suspicion. At issue is the dismissal of the longtime careerists in the White House Travel Office in 1993 and the efforts of Harry Thomason, the producer and Clinton pal, to finagle business for an air charter company which he partly owned. According to papers released by the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, Hillary Rodham Clinton was actively involved in the dismissals, the majority of which were later found to be unwarranted. According to a memo written by White House Aide David Watkins, the First Lady demanded: "[We] need those people out—we need our people in." This would be a good time for Mrs. Clinton to say what she knew and when she knew it.

OIL DEPENDENCE: Recently, former President Bush publicly endorsed a bill to allow oil drilling in the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Bush's reason mirrored the one put forward by the Republicans sponsoring the measure: it's necessary to combat American dependence on foreign oil. Senate Energy and Natural Resources chairman Frank Murkowski, the bill's principal sponsor, warns that "More than 50 percent [of oil consumed in the U.S.] comes from overseas, much from the volatile Middle East.... Some will say that no amount of oil is enough to justify exploration in Alaska. But if you ask those people where we should get our oil, they have no answer." Well, we do: the Strategic Petroleum Reserves. Under this program, when oil prices are low the government purchases vast surpluses and stores it in underground caverns for use during oil shocks or foreign crisis. We currently have 570 million gallons, and could pump in more. But Murkowski's committee isn't seeking to add to the reserves; it proposes instead to *sell off* 38 million barrels. So much for national security. The Alaska drilling seems to have more to do with—surprise!—a potential windfall for the big oil companies who finance Murkowski's campaigns.

FOOT IN DOLE: After hundreds of hours in front of focus groups, carefully testing every proposition of their argument for Medicare reform, the Republicans seemed to have the message down pat. "Protect and preserve," they chanted on cue. "Save and improve" murmured the foot soldiers of the revolution as they went into battle. But wouldn't you know it, Bob Dole, with his penchant for stating ugly truths, is off cue. In a candidate forum hosted this week by the American Conservative Union, he boasted that he is a "career conservative" not one of those Johnny Come Lately's against whom he's running. And the evidence: his 1965 vote against Medicare when it was initially proposed, because "I knew it wouldn't work." So as the GOP vows up and down that they want to return Medicare to its glory days, Bob Dole has once again let the cat out of the bag: he didn't like it even then. Back to the focus groups. •

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TIMBUKTU POSTCARD

STILL HERE

By Joshua Hammer

It was another unbearably hot afternoon in Timbuktu, and at the Thierry Sabine Bar on the town's main street, proprietor Oumer Zexe was beginning to feel the strain. He placed the establishment's single cassette—*Bob Marley Live*—into the boom box, wiped sand off a few more cocktail glasses and stared forlornly at the meager wares displayed on a rack behind the counter. The Thierry Sabine Bar (named after the organizer of the Paris-Dakar auto rally, which passes through Timbuktu every February) boasted four bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label and two bottles of Campari. All of them were empty. "Everybody is waiting for the boat," Zexe said. "When the boats start running, we'll have full bottles again."

Perched at the edge of the Sahara desert, eight miles above the northernmost bend of the Niger River, the fabled city of Timbuktu has for centuries been synonymous with the end of the earth. But the town's remoteness has never seemed as suffocating as now. Since 1991, Timbuktu has been terrorized by a rebellion of Tuareg nomads seeking independence from Mali and threatening the country's nascent democracy. Sweeping out of the Sahara on camels and four-wheel-drive Toyotas, the Tuaregs stopped road traffic dead, cut off supplies and wiped out the tourist trade. Tensions between Tuaregs and blacks grew, and black vigilantes, supplied with weapons by the Malian military, burned down Tuareg encampments in retaliation for rebel raids. At least 30,000 people fled to Mauritania, and Timbuktu's isolation deepened.

In May, at least, there was some good news: the government signed a truce with the rebels, promising economic development and integration of the armed forces. But three months of peace don't seem to have stopped the rot. You can see what the problems are. At the onset of the rainy season in July, when I visited the place, torrential downpours wiped out the two sand tracks that link Timbuktu to the nearest tarmac highway, 100 miles to the south. The big boats that transport passengers and cargo down the Niger River to Timbuktu don't begin operating until August, leaving the town virtually cut off from the outside world. (The only ways in or out are sporadic flights on Air Mali, nicknamed Air Maybe, and dugout canoes that ply the Niger shallows.) There are no newspapers, one radio station and two phone lines; in those dismal weeks before the first boat arrived, merchants spent much of their time gossiping in their mud-walled huts, counting supplies and waiting for the Niger to rise. Droughts and shifting sands have caused that event to come later and later. "Ten years ago the first boat arrived on July 1. Five years ago it was July 15," said Moulaye Haidara, a Timbuktu politician. "Now if we're lucky it's here by early August. In another five years, who knows?" Unless a paved road is built to Timbuktu, Haidara warned, "we will be lost forever."

Timbuktu has been losing its vitality steadily for the past 500 years. It hit its peak during the fifteenth century, when its position on the Niger River made it a bustling commercial crossroads for Saharan salt caravans and ivory, gold and slave traders from black Africa. The Kingdom of Mali's Islamic rulers built 180 Koranic schools and black Africa's greatest Islamic university here; the population swelled to 100,000 by 1450, including 25,000 Muslim scholars from as far away as Cairo. Descriptions of Timbuktu as a West African El Dorado led forty-three European explorers to try to reach the town across the Sahara desert between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries; all but four died in the crossing, either from thirst or at the hands of Tuareg warriors. Today plaques along the town's alleys identify the residences of such adventurers as the British Gordon Laing, who arrived in 1826 disguised as an Arab trader, only to be exposed and beheaded a few weeks later. A block away is the former abode of the Frenchman Rene Caillie, who came in 1828 and escaped to tell about it. By then the salt caravans had all but disappeared, replaced by European merchant fleets that sailed along the West coast of Africa, and Timbuktu had fallen into terminal decline. The city, Caillie wrote, consisted of "a jumble of badly built houses ruled over by a heavy silence."

It still is. Donkeys bray and black-veiled women wander outside Sankore Mosque, once black Africa's greatest center of Islamic learning, now a collapsing mud pyramid on a desolate street. At the Hotel Bouctou, one of Timbuktu's two tourist establishments, manager Boubacar Toure sipped tea in a sand-filled lobby decorated with decade-old Mali tourist posters. The next Air Mali flight from Bamako was three days away, and Toure hoped it would bring business. "We had no Westerners this week, and none the week before, but maybe we'll get lucky," he said. Of his twenty-nine rooms, only four were occupied, all by Malian traders. Beyond the hotel, sand blew across a landscape of dunes, scrawny acacia trees, hobbled camels and the domed cardboard-and-plastic huts of Tuareg refugees. Soulemane Al Galime, a Tuareg government clerk, sat sipping tea in a plastic chair and watched the scene. The place had its shortcomings, he admitted, but he had long ago surrendered to the inertia that seems to consume nearly everybody in Timbuktu. "I was born here, I grew up here, I have never left here," he said, shrugging. "I will probably die here, too."

JOSHUA HAMMER is *Newsweek*'s Nairobi bureau chief.

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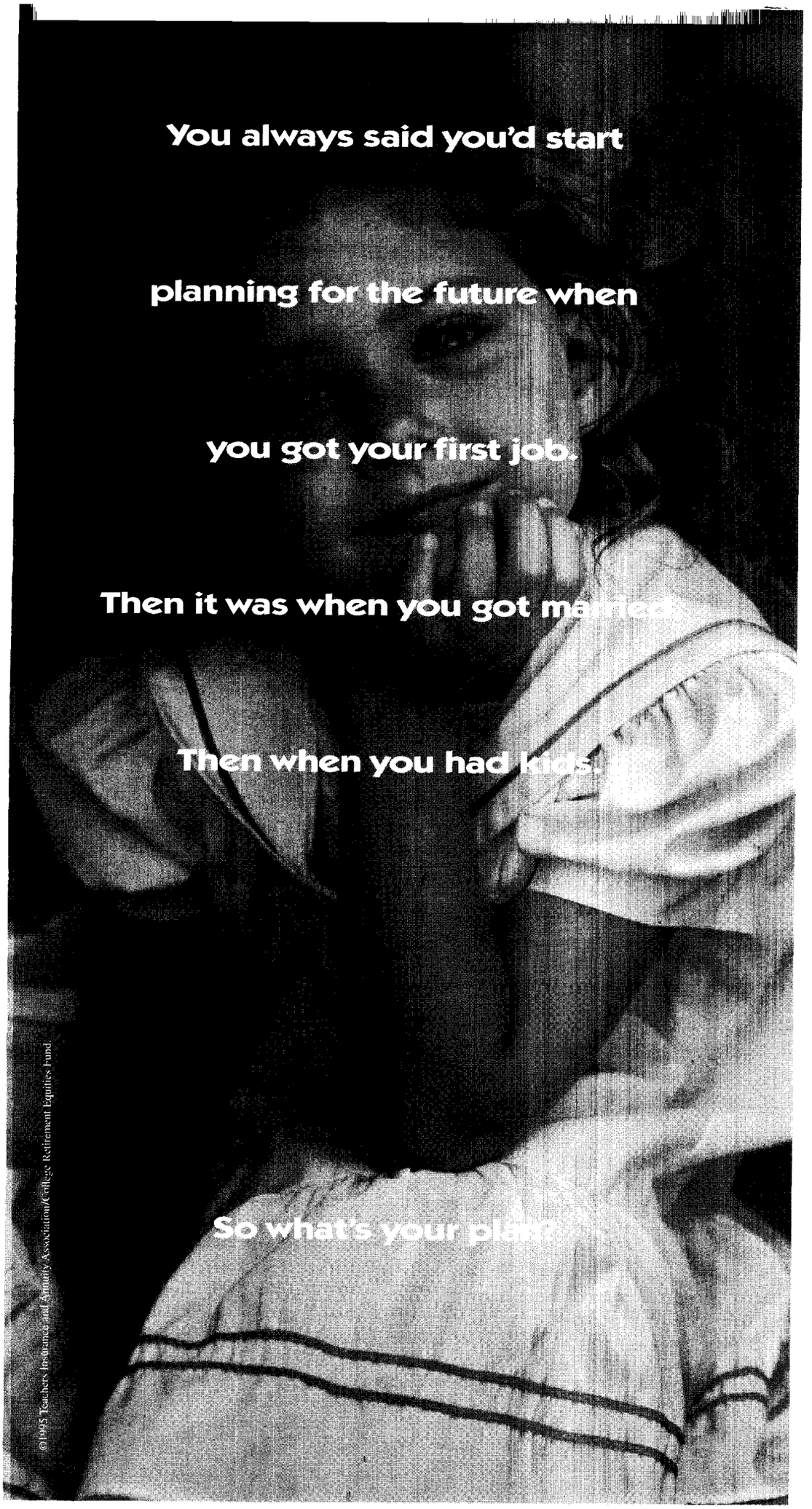
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Farrakhan, Napoleon and the Sphinx.

NOSE JOB

By Robert Girardi

> "White supremacy caused Napoleon to blow the nose off the Sphinx because it reminded [him] too much of the black man's majesty."
>
> —Louis Farrakhan, October 16

On the 19th of May, 1798, a young French general named Napoleon Bonaparte set off in his flagship *L'Orient* for the conquest of Egypt. The Mediterranean crossing was calm, Napoleon's officers found time to read, and several chose popular romantic novels of the day: Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, Bernardin de St. Pierre's *Paul and Virginia*. Needless to say, the serious-minded general did not approve of these frivolous works.

"Give them history," he told his librarian. "Men should read nothing else." This is a suggestion that Louis Farrakhan and other Afrocentric scholars would do well to heed. Farrakhan's long speech at the Million Man March was peppered with historical half truths, attacks on Western civilization and inaccuracies, but I will confine myself to exploding just one: that Napoleon Bonaparte blew the nose off the Great Sphinx at Giza. It's simply not true.

For the historical record, General Bonaparte, future Emperor of the French, had nothing to do with the mutilation of the Sphinx during the Egyptian campaign. It was the Ottoman Mamelukes, despotic Islamic overlords of Egypt, who shot the nose off this enigmatic monument long before Napoleon and his men landed in the moonlight at Marabut, eight miles down the beach from Alexandria.

"His lion's mane has been demolished," archaeologist C.W. Ceram writes of the sad and noble Sphinx in *Gods, Graves and Scholars*, "his eyes and nose are nothing but holes, for the Mamelukes used his head as a target when they practiced shooting their cannon."

In truth, the Sphinx and many other important Egyptian antiquities were much damaged over the centuries by Arab conquerors as well as Mamelukes. Art historian Cyril Aldred takes the long view in *The Egyptians*: "The cleavage of Egypt from its ancient heritage was completed in A.D. 693 when Amr, at the head of an Arab army, captured the country for the Caliph Omar and converted it to an Islamic State. The Moslems had no interest in Ancient Egypt except to eviscerate some of its standing monuments in the hope of unearthing the fabulous treasures they were thought to conceal. Antiquities were regarded askance as the work of infidels, to be shown indifference or hostility; witness the action of Sheikh Mohammed who mutilated the Great Sphinx at Giza because he thought it would please God."

Farrakhan's fabrication about Napoleon and the Sphinx has been gaining currency in Afrocentric circles; the poet Amiri Baraka, for example, espoused it at a rally at a Washington, D.C., high school the day before the march. According to this theory, Napoleon blew the nose off the Sphinx because it was a "black" nose; because the general's "sick," racist mind could not accept the visual evidence that black Africans had constructed the monument, and thus the complex ancient civilization of the Nile Valley, centuries before.

But history is more complicated than white against black, and Napoleon is a man who defies easy categories. When the general led his army of 55,000 men into Egypt, he was also accompanied by a smaller army of 167 scholars—including twenty-one mathematicians, three astronomers, seventeen engineers, thirteen naturalists, four architects, eight draughtsmen, ten men of letters and twenty-two printers who were equipped with Latin, Greek and Arabic characters. Napoleon's purpose in invading Egypt was twofold: to overthrow the Mamelukes and establish a French protectorate in their place; and to unearth and catalog the remains of Egypt's ancient civilization before it was entirely lost to the ravages of time and neglect.

The general's reverent attitudes toward Egypt's past is exemplified by his famous exhortation to his troops before the battle of the pyramids: "Soldiers! From the height of these pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you!" Like Louis Farrakhan, Napoleon saw Egyptian civilization as "the cradle of the science and art of all humanity," and in July 1798 he founded the famous Egyptian Institute, whose mission it was to dig that cradle out of the sands where it had lain hidden for thousands of years. The results of the institute's work, the *Description de l'Egypte*, published in ten massive folio volumes and two anthologies, is an exhaustive record of Egyptian antiquities that effectively began the science of Egyptology. Its 337 engravings and 3,000 illustrations took 400 artists twenty years to complete. Far from blowing the nose off the Sphinx with one of his legendary twelve-pounders, Napoleon ordered the monument dug out of sand that covered it to the neck and set his scholars to measure and record its exact dimensions.

One of the great attributes of Western civilization has been its desire to know about other cultures. When Louis Farrakhan condemns the West, he condemns the drive that led Napoleon Bonaparte to undertake the investigation of Egyptian culture, then languishing in the dust and lost to the world. He condemns the impulse that led to the *Description de l'Egypte*, to the decipherment of hieroglyphics, to everything that Farrakhan himself knows about ancient Egyptian civilization. Without Napoleon and his restless curiosity about other people and places, the noseless Sphinx would now lie completely buried beneath the shifting sands at Giza.

ROBERT GIRARDI's novel, *Madeleine's Ghost* (Delacorte), was published in July.

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Universal Access to E-Mail: Feasibility and Societal Implications, by R.H. Anderson, T.K. Bikson, S.A. Law, and B. Mitchell, is a comprehensive study of the key issues related to providing universal access to e-mail within the U.S. E-mail has swept the information world, yet diverging trends in access based on income and education place significant groups at a disadvantage. *Universal Access* makes recommendations for closing the access gap. (December '95) $20, 285 pp. ISBN 0-8330-2331-4. Call National Book Network: (800) 462-6420.

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Voting and Democracy Report: 1995 is essential reading. Its 78 articles analyze the 1994 elections, Voting Rights Act, U.S. movement for proportional representation and more. Authors include Hendrik Hertzberg, Kevin Phillips, and Lani Guinier. Send $12 to: CVD, 6905 Fifth St. NW, Washington, DC 20012 (202-882-7378, cvdusa@aol.com).

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REASON FOUNDATION

Revolution at the Roots: Making Our Government Smaller, Better, and Closer to Home, by William D. Eggers and John O'Leary, systematically challenges Osborne and Gaebler's *Reinventing Government*. The authors chronicle exciting examples of the revolution taking *place* beyond the Beltway, arguing that Washington is fast becoming irrelevant. Based on interviews with over 400 public officials from both political parties, *Revolution at the Roots* is the road map to smaller, better government. "Every American should be aware ... of this book."—**Newt Gingrich**. "Excellent hands-on account of the new governance."—**Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith**. "The real political story of the 1990s"—**Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist**. "Candidates should memorize it, or look for a different line of work."—**Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson**. 422 pp., September 1995. $25 to The Free Press, Attn: John McCrory, 9th Floor, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; or call 1-800-323-7445.

THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE

THE DIVERSITY MYTH: "Multiculturalism" and the Politics of Intolerance at Stanford, by David Sacks and Peter Thiel, is an insider's tour of the scandalous state of higher education: speech codes, gender wars, affirmative action, dumbing down of admissions and curricula, campus witch hunts, new-age victimology, and anti-Western zealotry that masquerades as "multiculturalism." *"Devastating, it is must reading!"*—**Philip Merril**, Publisher, Washingtonian. *"Convincingly argues that the campaign to impose 'multiculturalism' is nothing less than a war on civilization."*—**Elizabeth Fox-Genovese**, Professor of Humanities, Emory U. *"Shows how McCarthyism on the left is as dangerous as on the right."*—former Colorado Governor **Richard Lamm.** *"Most thorough book of what 'multiculturalism has meant."*—**Nathan Glazer**, Professor of Sociology, Harvard U. 300 pp. (Nov. '95). $28 postpaid. The Independent Institute, 134 Ninety-Eighth Ave., Oakland, CA 94603; call toll-free 1-800-927-8733; FAX 510-568-6040.

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PORT-AU-PRINCE POSTCARD

STITCHED UP

By Anna Husarska

Several decades ago, Sister Anne Marie, an Episcopal nun from Richmond, Virginia, and George, a Methodist missionary from Chicago, decided to move to Haiti. Despite their disparate backgrounds, the two ended up doing more or less the same thing in their adopted country: pursuing their religious callings and overseeing the process by which two figure-eight-shaped pieces of cowhide are joined by 108 hand-sewn stitches and, voilà, a baseball is born.

A crude Marxist would probably condemn Anne Marie and George for exploiting poor black workers to supply sports paraphernalia for Uncle Sam. But a sounder analysis would start by recognizing those jobs for what they were: jobs. Now, thanks to the U.S. and U.N. embargo and to some American do-gooders who railed against working conditions in Haiti's baseball plants, those jobs are gone.

Thirty years ago, Sister Anne Marie's manufacturing operation, set up on church premises, was a way for Haitians who wanted their kids to get a basic education at the Episcopal school to earn tuition money. Sister Anne Marie remembers the big table, the smell of the glue and the two dozen or so parents (mostly mothers) stitching the baseballs. "Hard labor as it was," she says, "it gave them some income."

In the mid-1980s, the 320 stitchers at the factory George supervised produced 12,000 balls a day; (each stitcher makes about three dozen a day, Stakhanovites reach four). Together, U.S.-owned and Haitian assembly plants employed more than 6,000 stitchers. All the big names in baseball production—Rawlings, Spalding, Dudley, Worth, Wilson—had plants here, and Haitian-stitched baseballs made up two-thirds of the total number of balls pitched on U.S. diamonds. Now they constitute just over 1 percent, and probably no more than 200 people produce baseballs on a given day in the whole of Haiti. When I visited this summer only one baseball factory was in operation; two others were temporarily closed.

The baseball workshops do have their Dickensian aspects, but then no one has ever invented a machine that can stitch a baseball, and manual workshops look anachronistic anywhere. Huge fans—noisy but efficient—surround the stitchers. Most stitchers are women, and none is likely to have ever played baseball. The work is hard and monotonous: two pieces of cowhide must be glued together onto a yarn-spun core—then fixed with two strong staples that will be discarded as the sewing progresses. The sewing is done with red nylon thread (waxed, for reasons obvious to any user of dental floss) and with two needles at once, which produce those neat "V" stitches. To yank on the threads the stitchers outstretch both arms every few seconds in that notoriously Nixonian gesture. Periodically, Haitian Cinderellas sweep the heavy-duty staples on the floor into big piles, dump them on a table and painstakingly sort them: good small ones (for baseballs), good large ones (for softballs) and bad ones.

Wages in these assembly plants were always appalling by U.S. standards. These days they hover around $3 a day, more than the legal minimum wage in Haiti but still very low, especially considering that an average of seven people live off one such salary.

Five years ago a Pennsylvania-based religious group, Pax Christi USA, decided that these working conditions could not be tolerated and organized a write-in campaign to the commissioner of baseball complaining about Rawlings's labor practices. (Religious orders, whose members were part of the campaign, also bought up shares in the company in order to be admitted to board meetings.) The effort was ultimately successful: Rawlings moved its operations to Costa Rica and China. But "successful" is perhaps not quite the right word. More than 1,000 Haitian stitchers lost their jobs when Rawlings left, which translates into some 7,000 people losing their means of subsistence; in the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, there were virtually no other jobs to be had. The rest of the companies departed after the U.S. and the U.N. imposed an embargo against the military junta that overthrew president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in September 1991.

Claude Martin, who used to run Dudley's outfit in Haiti and employed 800 stitchers, sounds bitter: "All of Dudley's stitching is now in China, and unless there is a dramatic change in U.S. relations with China we will never get them back into Haiti." Martin is trying to stay in the baseball business in Haiti, but orders are low: he did only two and a half months' worth of stitching this year and is down to a staff of sixty. To help defray the cost of his plant on the airport road in Port-au-Prince, Martin produces fish lures on the side. As one plant manager put it: "We don't expect to drop out of the market totally, but I don't think we will ever be back where we were."

Maxime Conde, whose company, Team Manufacturing, once stitched baseballs for Wilson Sporting Goods and employed 900 people, is now considering a very modest restart with about sixty people. Three years of embargo were tough, he says, but he had calculated the risk and somehow survived. He's not sure, though, how his country will look after the U.N.'s departure next February. Part of his business will certainly be hurt: he's the one who supplies the U.S. Army with souvenir baseballs bearing the names of the units that come and go, or simply the words "Operation Uphold Democracy." •

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A tax cut that would make sense.

KIDDIE CREDIT

By Matthew Miller

The deficit will hit $300 billion early in the next century, held back only by Washington's latest seven- and ten-year promises to stop it. This doesn't even take into account the wave of baby-boom retirements that will start a decade from now, sending health and retirement costs off the charts and the red ink even higher. We're slipping the bill for a breathtaking $14 trillion in unfunded entitlement promises to our kids, dooming them to huge tax hikes to pay for it all. In Washington this fall, our fearless leaders study these trends and reach the inevitable bipartisan conclusion: time for a big tax cut!

We shouldn't be cutting taxes, period. But if it's inevitable, we can come up with a better scheme than the capital gains giveaway and skip-the-poor child tax credit that now look likely. It's called "KidSave," and it's the brainchild of Senators Joseph Lieberman and Bob Kerrey, two of the few Democrats still trying to think rather than merely demagogue. With Republicans increasingly under fire about the size and regressive tilt of their party's own tax cuts, KidSave could emerge as the sounder alternative in a mad, mad Congress.

The idea is simple. KidSave would give parents a $500 refundable tax credit per child each year if the money goes into an IRA-style retirement account set up in the child's name. In effect, it's a government-funded forced savings plan, which, thanks to the magic of compound interest, produces a hefty nest egg for junior to tap. Assuming an 8 percent annual return, $500 invested yearly until a child is 18 would grow to $750,000 by the time she was 65. At a 10 percent return (not uncommon in a diversified equity fund), she's a millionaire by 60. Kids might tap this fund to borrow for college; otherwise they'd draw it down tax-free at retirement and be encouraged to add to it, starting with their own childhood allowances, over their lifetimes.

There are problems with the idea, starting with its exorbitant price tag. With 68 million kids aged 18 and under, $500 a year costs a whopping $34 billion. At $238 billion over seven years, that's close to the $245 billion cut the GOP has pledged. Then there's the question of fairness. It's hardly "class warfare" to ask why taxpayers should set up trust funds for little Vanderbilts, who presumably have a few of their own.

The proposal's real virtue is pedagogical. It spotlights Americans' disastrously low rates of personal savings, now stalled below 5 percent of household income, compared to nearly 15 percent in Japan and more than 12 percent in Germany. This savings gap starves business investment. It also puts retirement security at risk, especially with pension coverage shrinking and Social Security headed for its own financial waterloo. Raising national savings is among the most urgent, if least sexy, issues facing our aging population. By giving this imperative a political peg this fall, Kerrey and Lieberman could jumpstart a much-needed public discussion about restoring the culture of thrift, from cradle to grave.

Since the KidSave credit would be refundable, the working poor would be eligible. The GOP's child credit, by contrast, goes only to those who pay enough taxes to use it. KidSave would promote savings and investment more than the GOP's capital gains illusion, which simply halves the taxes Leona Helmsley owes when she cashes in 10-year-old IBM stock to buy shares of Microsoft.

Since KidSave doles out fewer goodies to Republican voters and industry pals than competing schemes, the GOP reception will likely be lukewarm. What's more, forcing families to save their tax credit may strike the Freshman Phalanx as the dawn of a scary new paternalism that could bring us back to such McGovernick excesses as mandated motorcycle helmets and mine safety laws. One GOP tax staffer therefore predicts Republicans will dismiss KidSave out of hand, arguing that "families should use their own best judgment."

It's hard to object, except that Republican tax cuts that "let people spend the money the way they want" translate, when you see the fine print, into "let's get the money to *our* people and let *them* spend it the way they want." That same GOP principle, after all, is bringing us this season's abolition of Medicaid and AFDC guarantees for the poor, while windfall mortgage and Social Security entitlements for the well-off rise without scrutiny.

In the end, as with IRAs, it's hard to know if KidSave would really increase national savings. In theory, forcing a tax cut to go into a retirement fund should lift savings. But the result also depends on whether the deficit's drain on national savings is truly eliminated as part of the package that finances the tax cut, and whether this forced saving simply substitutes for whatever saving people are doing now. Because poorer people who'd be eligible don't save now, it's reasonable to expect that savings will rise. Still, even if the full $34 billion a year is added to national savings, at .5 percent of GDP, it's at best a down payment on closing the thrift gap.

In an imperfect world, KidSave is better than current Republican plans. Ultimately a form of damage control, the proposal still makes a sensible, substantive point. That's more than you can say for most of what passes for policy innovation in the age of the Contract with America. Maybe one day we'll have a higher hurdle.

MATTHEW MILLER, a former Clinton budget official, writes on politics and economics.

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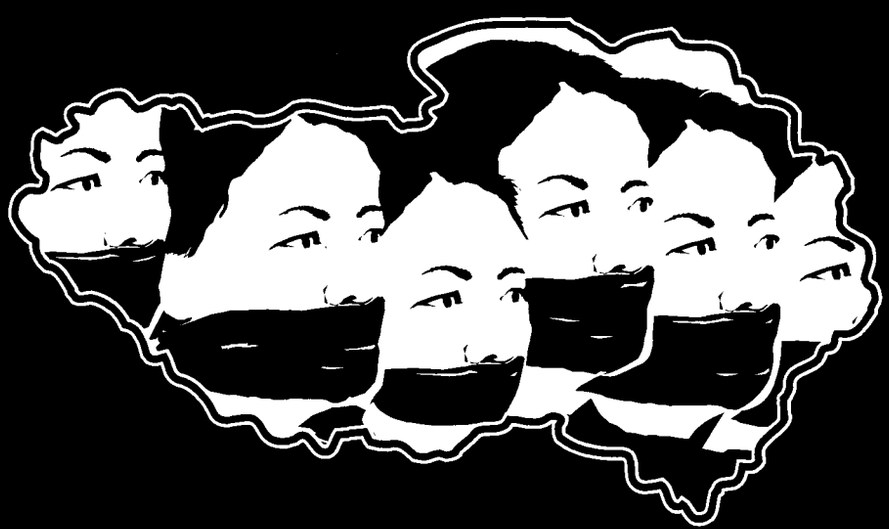

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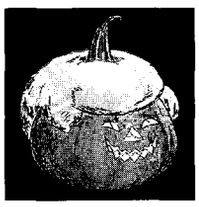
The GOP and your pension.

GEEZER TEASER

By Jonathan Chait

Several weeks ago, the Labor Department released an innocuous set of guidelines that encouraged pension funds to voluntarily put money in investments with some social benefits—creating jobs, say—so long as they maintained a comparable rate of return. Republicans went ballistic. "We'll not stand by and let the Clinton administration raid workers' hard-earned pensions," growled Majority Leader Dick Armey. Yet Republicans said nothing about preventing *companies* from raiding workers' hard-earned pensions. In fact, they've been doing their part to encourage it.

Shortly after Armey issued his ringing defense of pension fund integrity, his fellow House Texan Bill Archer proposed a tax change allowing businesses to siphon money from their employee pensions. Though this process goes by the bland-sounding name of "pension reversion," it represents a radical—and troubling—break with precedent.



Under current law, pensions are virtually untouchable. Companies that want to dip into their employee pension fund must pay a 20 or 50 percent excise tax in addition to the 35 percent corporate rate, and they must use the funds for employee health benefits. With such prohibitive requirements, hardly anybody does it. The House Republican bill would provide a six-month window during which companies could withdraw money from pensions, for any purpose, and pay no excise tax (so long as they have enough in the till to meet their current obligations to workers, plus 25 percent over that). After the six months, the excise would settle at 6.5 percent until the end of the century.

The attraction of this plan is that it raises quick revenue (an estimated $10 billion) while at the same time pumping billions in profits to business. How does this work? Most employee pension plans invest in stocks, and the stock market is now at an all-time high, which means that many company pensions contain far more than they need to meet current obligations. These businesses see their overfunded pensions as a big birthday present that they're never allowed to open. Archer's proposal allows them to take it out and unwrap it, handing over a little more than a third to the government and investing the remainder in employee health plans, new equipment, fabulous office parties or whatever. The Senate has designed a similar proposal, which requires that the money be used for employee benefits. (Of course, the money that would otherwise have been used for employee benefits can then be turned into profit.)

Republicans offer two basic justifications for this grabbiness. First, the current system is a black hole for management; money put in can never be taken out. Eliminating these penalties, they argue, will make corporations less wary of overfunding and hence more likely to invest generously in pensions. But the bill only covers pensions that are overfunded *now*. Any excess built up in the future will face the old penalties.

The second claim is that allowing companies to remove funds in excess of 125 percent of current obligations is a sufficient cushion. This is misleading for several reasons. The current liabilities of a pension plan are what the company would owe if the plan ended tomorrow and all workers were paid on the basis of how long they had worked to date. But pensions are presumably intended to continue past tomorrow, and current employees will rack up bigger pensions as they put in more years. Studies by the General Accounting Office show that companies can easily manipulate accounting assumptions to make pensions appear overfunded. And, if the stock market goes south, many pension plans could go under. Republicans don't seem to be worried. "We believe corporations will be responsible," said a tax staffer on the House Ways and Means Committee.

While this sort of trust is touching, history, unfortunately, suggests otherwise. In the 1980s, before excise penalties were enacted, corporations took $20 billion in pension reversions. Twenty such companies now have seriously underfunded pensions. Exxon, for example, removed $1.6 billion in 1986. Now its pension is underfunded by $500 million. Pension reversions in the 1980s had another consequence: leveraged buyouts. With a similar stock market boom, pensions overflowed with millions in surplus, and corporate raiders bought businesses in order to loot the pensions. Other businesses, in turn, kept their own pension funds down in order to avoid becoming takeover targets themselves. A series of progressively steeper excise taxes implemented by Congress at the end of the decade finally put a halt to the practice.

Since then, the political left and right have reached consensus on protecting savings. One of the main justifications for the Republican tax reform proposals has been to increase the national savings rate. On behalf of his consumption tax plan, House Ways and Means Chairman Archer wrote, "A consumption tax would greatly favor savings. Almost every economist will tell you that one of the greatest single financial crises facing this country is its lack of savings." Our personal savings rate, now among the lowest in the developed world, has fallen by about half in the last twenty years, down to 5 percent. (Japan's stands at about 15 percent.) Over half this decline is directly attributable to declining private-sector contributions to employee pension plans. Archer's own figures suggest that his plan will lure employers to suck at least $30 billion more out of pen-

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Common Sense? Not to Some

Every poll shows that the American people say discipline is the number one problem in the schools. In focus groups, parents say that they don't believe any proposed reforms will work if there is a chronically disruptive student in the class. What should be done? Agreement is overwhelming. For example, "First Things First," the Public Agenda report released last year, found that 76 percent of white parents and 79 percent of African-American parents say disruptive students should be removed from class; and a recent Gallup poll found that 77 percent of all Americans favor educating these youngsters in alternative settings. This would allow the vast majority of students to learn and the few disruptive students to get special help.

This proposal is now part of the American Federation of Teachers' national campaign on standards of conduct and standards for achievement. We are working to get school boards, administrators, parents, community groups, business executives, and policymakers to back this proposal and insist that it be faithfully enforced.

When I talk about educating consistently disruptive students in alternative settings, members of the press and the general public often ask, "Why do you need a national campaign to push for this? Isn't it just common sense?" They're right, of course. But it's not happening in the schools because many school officials reject common sense in favor of "sophisticated" arguments.

A classic example occurred recently when I spoke on this and other issues to a national organization representing urban school boards and superintendents. After my speech, I received a nasty letter from the executive director of the organization. The letter does not represent the views of all the members of the organization, but many school board members and administrators would agree with it. The letter illustrates perfectly why public schools are in trouble and why we need a national campaign for common sense.

First, it accused me of wanting to exclude "children from school because they have been disruptive." Because I had said that failure to respond to disruptive behavior leads to peer pressure on other students to become disruptive, I was charged with creating a "conspiratorial scenario" and told that there was serious "doubt that such events occur often." And then our campaign was attacked as "a national campaign of exclusion" because we propose to place disruptive students in alternative settings.

The attack continued. My failure to provide an exact blueprint of alternative settings was taken as evidence that my "interests extend only to children who do not present teachers with any problems. As leaders of our nation's urban schools," he continued, "we believe our responsibilities include educating all children—not just those who sit still all day." And there's more! Asking that violent and chronically disruptive students be educated separately "has the classic ring of 'blaming the victim....'"

There you have it. To hell with what the overwhelming majority of teachers, parents, citizens, and students want! The letter writer—and the school officials who go along with him—know what's right and that's that! This is the attack that faces the teacher or parent who dares to complain.

We can fight back. These people distort the proposal to educate disruptive children in alternative settings by charging that we seek to exclude these students from education. They say that disruptive behavior is something that doesn't "occur often"—even though parents see it, together with its magnification through bullying and peer pressure, as problem number one. They present themselves as good guys who want to educate all the children and accuse us of being bad guys who only want to educate the easy ones. But are they educating all the children? In most classes with a disruptive child, none of the children are being educated. That's why parents are angry.

They speak sneeringly about the great majority of kids who come to school and want to learn, calling them the children "who sit still all day." As for parents and teachers who want to educate the disruptive in alternative settings so that *all* can learn—they are accused of "blaming the victim." The writer of this letter and the school board members and administrators who support this point of view have turned everything upside down! While they pretend to occupy the moral high ground, they don't care at all about the real victims, the overwhelming majority of students whose education is being destroyed by a handful of students. Their only concern is for the chronically disruptive students whom they labor to protect from the consequences of their own actions. And they are not even doing the right thing for these students.

By refusing alternative placement for disruptive students, they are denying them the help and special attention they need and can rarely get in a regular classroom. They are clearly saying that all the other children—the well-behaved children, whose life circumstances may be as horrific as those of the disruptive ones—can be damned. Their position is clear, and it is immoral.

As for trying to shift the blame to teachers, that's an old trick. When I was a beginning teacher in the 1950s and was assaulted by a student, I asked the principal for help. Instead, I got the following note: "Mr. Shanker: This would not have happened if you had motivated your students. I'd like to see your planbook. I'll be in to observe you soon." The message was clear: Whenever you report a disruptive student, I'll blame you, not the student, so handle your own problems and don't bother me.

Do the letter writer and the other school officials he is talking for really believe what they're saying? By now they probably do. For many years, the only pressure they've felt has come from other individuals and groups who advocate for violent and disruptive students. That's why we need a national campaign. These people need to hear from the overwhelming majority of parents and citizens, who have never before been organized or mobilized. They don't want to switch to vouchers or private schools to get a good education for their children, and they don't have to. We can take back the public schools. They belong to all of us—and especially to the students who come to school and want to learn.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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sions almost immediately.

So why are Republicans so willing to sacrifice pensions? In part, because of a conflict between Archer and House Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich. Last spring Kasich urged his party to counter the charge that they were sparing the rich. For example, Kasich suggested they cut $25 billion in "corporate welfare." Archer, who represents one of the wealthiest districts in the country, insisted that "There's no such thing." Refusing even to close the infamous loophole for millionaires who flee the country to avoid taxes, he has instead tried to squeeze money from programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit, a subsidy to the working poor.

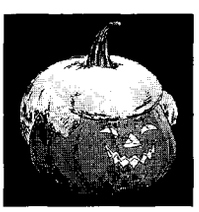
But the working poor are a particularly finite source of funds. Pension reversions allow Archer to free up funds for deficit reduction *and* please business. "It's the only way to raise $10 billion by giving a favor to somebody," explained a Democratic House staffer familiar with the process. Kasich, nevertheless, is mollified. "They talked about closing loopholes, and we're doing it," he gushed to *The Los Angeles Times*. "This is a message to people who work on assembly lines and in convenience stores that everyone has given." •

Newt's war on national service.

AMERICORPSE

By Steven Waldman

Pity poor AmeriCorps. The national service program is all Bill Clinton has left, and that is why Republicans have attacked it with special vigor. Of the five priorities Clinton announced after his election—health care, political reform, economic stimulus, deficit reduction and national service—AmeriCorps is now the closest thing he has to a "legacy." It's not hard to see why Republicans want it to disappear: if they eliminate AmeriCorps they could remove from future history books any evidence that there'd even been a Clinton presidency.



But a few months from now, when Republicans calm down and start picking bits of safety-net from their teeth, they will undoubtedly feel silly. They will realize that AmeriCorps—which gives college scholarships to young men and women who do full-time community service—was the solution to their dilemma of how to dismantle the welfare state without seeming cruel. National service, after all, replaces government bureaucracies with a "thousand points of light"-style constellation of charitable groups.

Most AmeriCorps money goes to efficient nonprofit organizations like the Red Cross or Boys' Clubs. For instance, in Miami, twenty-four AmeriCorps members worked with Habitat for Humanity—Newt's favorite charity—to construct a ninety-house development for the poor to live in and own. They finished forty-four homes in one year, a record no public housing authority could match, in part because of the work of more than 5,000 unpaid volunteers coordinated by AmeriCorps members. At a Kentucky tutoring program called SLICE, AmeriCorps volunteers gave second-graders regular one-on-one attention the regular teachers were too overworked to give, and as a result, reading comprehension scores increased 116 percent in about six months. Around the country, AmeriCorps members are performing services—providing disaster relief, hauling debris from rivers, helping police shut down crack houses—far more cost-effectively than most government programs.

In a letter titled "National Service—Truly Republican," sixteen House Republicans who supported Clinton's national service legislation in 1993 wrote, "We believe national service is a basic Republican idea, and that the president's proposal is structured as a Republican would have structured it." Two-thirds of the AmeriCorps money is distributed through the states according to a competition between different local programs. The other third is given out by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, also through a competition.

Yet AmeriCorps has so far fared worse than any other major program in the budget. Consider this: for all the attacks on government-funded blasphemy, the National Endowment for the Arts has survived. So has the (permissive) National Endowment for the Humanities, the (elitist) Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the (socialistic) Legal Services Corporation and the (sandal-wearing) Department of Education. Yet both the House and Senate zeroed out national service.

Republican attacks on AmeriCorps have been bizarrely hyperbolic. Participants in government-funded national service, said Speaker Newt Gingrich, "become not only useless, they become dangerous." The GOP has also practiced gross statistics-abuse in order to portray AmeriCorps, inaccurately, as a boondoggle. The General Accounting Office had concluded that the Corporation for National and Community Service, which oversees the program, spends an average of $17,600 per recruit, including an $8,000 stipend, a $4,725 scholarship and the cost of helping to run the local programs. Opponents added to that number the amount that local governments and private companies contributed to the programs, arriving at a total of $27,000 in "resources" per volunteer. But Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa soon started referring to the $27,000 "cost" per volunteer, implying that the feds pay for it all. During Senate debate, other lawmakers distorted the distortion by describing the $27,000 figure as the AmeriCorps member's *salary*. Senator Rick Santorum then did a bit of rounding off and complained that young people only serve because they "get paid $30,000 a year."

AmeriCorps does, to be sure, have problems. Even the

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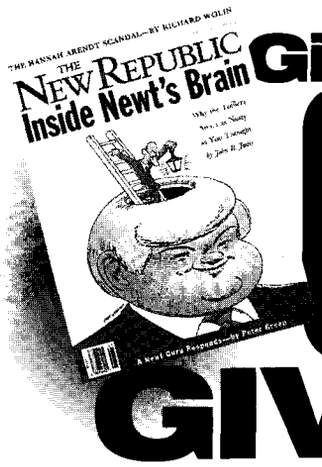

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$17,600 cost, though impressive by government standards, could be lowered by soliciting more from the private sector. The program is probably too diffuse now—400 programs in 1,200 sites—making quality control harder. A Republican Congress could improve the quality by removing some of the provisions originally put in by Democrats, like union-inspired rules limiting the types of work volunteers can do. Democrats launched a good program; Republicans could improve it—and take credit.

Alas, making programs work better does not seem to be the Republicans' primary goal. For more evidence, one need look no further than the college loan program—national service's fraternal twin. Recall that during the 1992 campaign Clinton's national service promise actually had two components: Americans should be able to get the money to go college and pay it back *either* by doing community service (that's the part that became AmeriCorps) *or* "as a percentage of income over time." That second phrase referred to what are known as "income-contingent" loans. Originated by Milton Friedman, they allow graduates who earn large incomes to make larger payments and those who earn less to make smaller payments stretched out over more years. It's an important reform that makes college debt more bearable and broadens access to higher education just as the introduction of the thirty-year mortgage expanded home ownership. And, as Clinton saw it, flexible loan repayment could make it easier for people to take lower-paying public service jobs.

With very little attention, Congress in 1993 approved not only AmeriCorps but income-contingent loans as well. These pay-as-you-can loans, however, were part of a larger, more controversial change known as "direct lending," in which the government kicks the banks and other middlemen from the guaranteed student loan program. And this caused a problem. Under direct lending the Treasury gives the money directly to the schools, dramatically simplifying the process for colleges and students. Banks didn't like that idea since student loans provide a safe form of profit for them (government guarantees will do that). But in 1993 Democrats rammed the reform down their throats.

The program has so far proven quite successful. About 30 percent of loans go through this direct lending, and schools seem to like it. More important, the competition from the government has spurred private lenders into making their loans cheaper and simpler. Some banks now offer repayment terms matching those offered by the government; others have cut their loan processing time from three weeks down to two days. Suffice it to say, the Republicans have moved to eliminate direct lending, too—and with it flexible repayment. They don't want an enlarged role for Big Daddy Government, even if it provides competition that makes the overall system more efficient.

But as they tried to kill this Clinton reform, the Republicans had a small problem: by cutting out the middlemen, direct lending saved the Treasury money, according to the Congressional Budget Office. How could the Republicans axe direct lending without exacerbating the deficit? They devised a brazen solution: change the budget rules! With a simple technical amendment, they ordered the CBO to count the money in a different way—a way that made direct lending a money *loser* instead of a money saver—without changing anything about the program. So, in 1993 Congress saved money by creating direct lending; in 1995 they saved money by eliminating it. If they continued this pattern long enough—creating the program, say, in even-numbered years and terminating it in odd-numbered—they could eliminate the entire budget deficit.

The truth is that the AmeriCorps and college loan programs haven't worked perfectly, but they have worked pretty well. In Washington discourse, though, programs are either DISASTROUS or TRIUMPHANT. Issues are dropped into a high-speed information-smasher that ejects all nuance, leaving only pure, toxic exaggeration. In such an environment, debate invariably focuses on preserving or destroying, never improving. And we wonder why people are cynical about politics.

STEVEN WALDMAN, National Correspondent for *Newsweek*, is author of *The Bill*, a book about national service and college loans to be released in paperback in January (Penguin).

Vouchers: Medicare's only hope.

MEDI-CHOICE

By Einer Elhauge

They're right: Medicare is out of control. It's growing at more than 10 percent a year, almost twice as fast as private-sector medicine and four times the rate of the national economy. The Clinton-appointed Trustees of Medicare themselves recognize that "The Medicare program is clearly unsustainable in its present form." Next year the payroll tax will no longer cover hospital benefits, and within seven years Medicare will exhaust reserves and be unable to pay hospitals at all. Indeed, Medicare is almost single-handedly responsible for our national budgetary mess. Restrain its growth to a still-hefty 6.4 percent a year, and a balanced budget is within reach by 2002.

The waste Medicare generates is legendary. Platoons of Medicare consultants advise doctors how to "code" their patients' diagnoses to maximize hospital revenue. Worse, Medicare gives incentives to perform unnecessary—and often unwanted and even harmful—operations on the elderly because it pays doctors per procedure. Yet despite all the money poured into Medicare, coverage and medical treatment are getting worse, not

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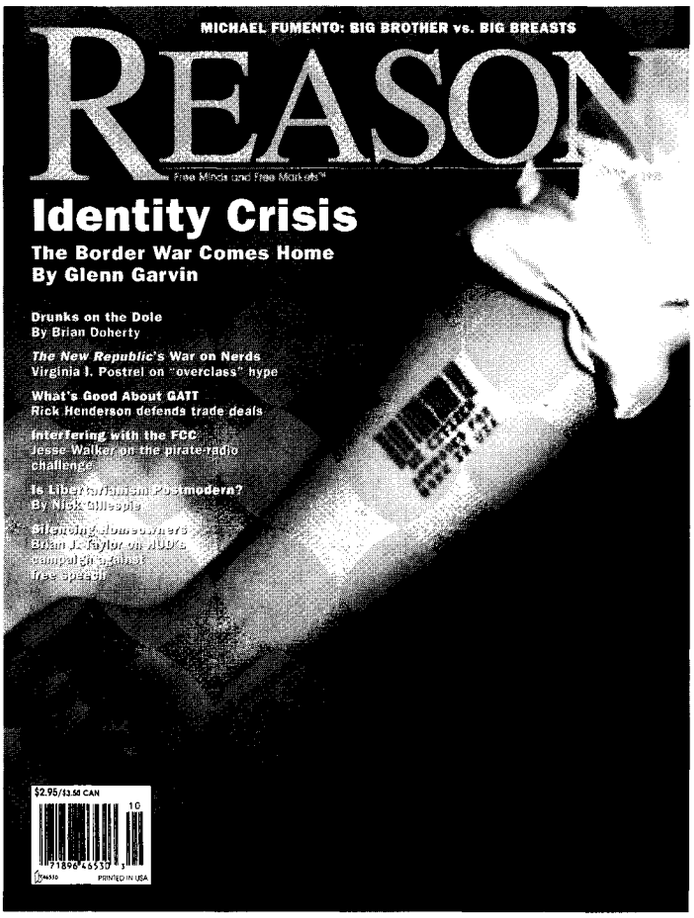
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better. Growing deductibles, copayments, premiums and gaps in Medicare coverage have forced the elderly to buy Medigap insurance and make other out-of-pocket payments totaling more than $3,000 per person. The stunning result is that the average elderly person now has to spend a *higher* percentage of income on health care than *before* Medicare was enacted.

The Republican reform bill before Congress contains a serious alternative to this system: a provision effectively allowing individuals to exchange their Medicare benefits for vouchers. The core idea is delightfully simple. Instead of having Medicare bureaucrats make health care spending decisions for everyone, each person would make such decisions for his or her share of Medicare funds.

There are competing reform proposals floating through Washington these days, some of which the GOP has included in its reform package as well: lowering reimbursement rates, restricting coverage or eligibility and raising Medicare premiums, copayments, deductibles or payroll taxes. But these strategies have all been tried before and failed because they do not challenge Medicare's basic premise: that if care is medically beneficial, it should be provided and reimbursed. Since most experts believe we could spend 100 percent of our GDP on health care without running out of services that have a positive health benefit, this is insanity. Only vouchers address the problem at its root.

The consequences of Medicare's absolutist financing were predictable from the start. The government begins by using the previous year's figures to predict how much Medicare will cost. But, knowing that further care will be reimbursed, the medical industry expands. A Medicare deficit ensues. Unwilling to trade off health benefits against costs, Medicare administrators declare a crisis and insist on more funds. Congress raises Medicare payroll taxes or premiums, or takes more from general tax revenues. But any higher level of spending invites more expansion, causing a deficit that demands more funds.

Because scarcity ultimately imposes limits, sometimes the budget cannot be increased. But lawmakers cannot admit that some medical care has benefits too marginal to fund. Instead, they generally maintain the public commitment to covering all medical care, but lower payments. Deductibles or copayments are raised, or reimbursements to doctors or hospitals are lowered or capped. Some slowdown may result. But because payments are still made per service or diagnostic treatment, and physicians largely control what services are performed and what diagnoses are made, the restrictions fail to stem the expansion. Patients follow their doctors' recommendations and have little incentive to cease overconsuming health care since Medicare still covers 80 percent of the costs and Medigap insurance usually covers the rest. And setting service payments equal to their marginal cost does nothing to discourage low-benefit services. Other times, lawmakers respond with cutoffs and exclusions. Coverage is limited to a number of hospital days, or some services are deemed experimental or nonmedical. But neither strategy stops open-ended expansion in the hospital days or categories of medical care that remain covered.

The ill effects are not limited to Medicare. By fueling medical inflation, Medicare has helped increase national medical costs per person from $211 in 1965 to $3,393 in 1994, making health insurance unaffordable for many and perversely increasing the number of uninsured. It also retards the evolution of medical practice. The changes in organization, practice and financing sweeping privately funded medicine cannot be fully accommodated when hospitals must simultaneously comply with a Medicare model as economically archaic as vacuum-tube computers.

Sure, there are other popular scapegoats for Medicare cost increases. Medicare administrator Bruce Vladeck blames an expanding Medicare population and costly medical innovations. But the Medicare population is expanding by only 1 to 2 percent a year and cannot explain 10 percent annual increases. And blaming medical innovation confuses the symptom with the underlying disease. The *reason* we have ever more costly medical drugs and technology is that the financing system encourages it.

Suppose the standard drug for treating heart disease is 98 percent effective, and a new drug is 99 percent effective but ten times more costly. Under an absolutist financing scheme, the new drug must be reimbursed. Medical innovation is blamed for the tenfold price increase. But, like Sherlock Holmes's dog that did not bark, the interesting point is what we do *not* observe: the development of a new drug that is 97 percent effective but one-tenth as costly. Why? Because no one would use it under such a financing regime. Researchers thus focus on developing a slightly more effective drug, no matter what the additional cost. This is the *Field of Dreams* problem of health care innovation: if we'll pay for it, it will come.

Vouchers are an elegant solution to these problems. Because they give beneficiaries a fixed amount to spend, each has incentives to choose insurance plans that use those limited funds wisely. Plans that fail to maximize health benefits per dollar spent would lose enrollees to competitors. Successful plans would demand the most cost-effective care from doctors and hospitals. And researchers would have incentives to investigate ways of making care less expensive.

Various objections have been raised to vouchers. One, asserted by HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary Judith Feder, is that vouchers amount to "fiscal coercion." Nonsense. Vouchers are no more coercive than handing someone a check with the amount filled in rather than left blank. Second, many fear the elderly will make poor choices. To some extent this reflects unattractive paternalism. The more serious concern is that they might be duped by flimflam operations. But this is amply addressed by requiring plans taking vouchers to meet solvency standards and to provide core medical and hospital coverage. Third, some argue that resolving Medicare's problems must await national health reform. This gets the priority backwards. Voters will not accept serious

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overall reform until Washington shows it can effectively run the part of health care it already controls.

The fourth concern, often raised by the Clinton administration, is that insurers will "cherry pick," insuring only healthy Medicare beneficiaries who will not spend their entire voucher. This is a real worry. But it has two responses, both of which the Republican plan adopts. One is legal prohibition: requiring insurers to accept everyone regardless of their health. But the incentive to risk select would remain huge and the means often subtle and difficult to regulate. Plans have, for example, been known to accept all applications but require that they be picked up at a second-floor office without elevator access, thus effectively selecting only the ambulatory.

So voucher amounts should also be adjusted for the beneficiary's age, sex, residence and health status. The less healthy would get a higher voucher and, thus, may be no less attractive to insurers than the more healthy. To be sure, within any subcategory lies a spectrum of health risks. Because our ability to subcategorize is limited, some room for risk selection will always remain. But, as long as adjustments put voucher amounts in the ballpark of predictable costs, they probably suffice when coupled with regulation. In any event, risk selection plagues any program that offers individuals a choice of plans. Indeed, the Clinton health plan presented the same problem and responded to it in the very ways the administration now finds inadequate.

I would add a third response: require plans to spend all collected voucher amounts on health care. This undermines the incentive to cherry pick because insurers could not profit by spending less than the voucher amount. Rather, their only profits would come from a bonus paid to them per enrollee. For the same reason, they would have far less incentive to undertreat enrollees. Plans' sole incentive would be to do a good enough job allocating their voucher budget to attract more enrollees (and bonuses) the next year. The Republican plan does something similar by requiring insurers with costs below the voucher amount to spend the difference on providing more health care to their enrollees.

The Republican plan's guarantee that seniors have the right to stay in the traditional Medicare system creates another danger of potential risk selection. The 1985 creation of a Medicare HMO option contained a similar provision, and the unhealthy disproportionately stayed in the traditional system. The result: although nominally costing 95 percent as much, HMOs only fueled cost escalation because their enrollees were more than 5 percent healthier. The GOP bill redresses this problem, however, by adjusting provider payment rates yearly to equalize the budgetary growth of vouchers and traditional Medicare. Those staying in traditional Medicare would thus find it increasingly difficult to find doctors and hospitals willing to treat them and would no longer gain an advantage of open-ended funding over those who exit. Even the unhealthy would thus have incentives to switch to private plans that can squeeze more from the same funds.

The economic advantages of voucherizing Medicare are only reinforced by political and moral considerations. Because no centralized bureaucracy can possibly possess the case-specific information necessary to make wise health care decisions for 37 million individuals, it must inevitably rely on broad rules that offer at best crude justice and rapidly fall out of date. Vouchers instead decentralize power to those who are better informed about their own circumstances and can more nimbly adjust to changes in costs and practices. Government officials are also prone to favor politically salient heroic care to identifiable individuals over preventive care that has a bigger health impact but is statistical and too dull for television. And because studying the details of what health care to provide is so difficult and technical, only special interests are likely to incur the high costs of analyzing and expressing views about such details. Vouchers lessen the political bias toward identifiable patients and interest groups by limiting ongoing political decisions to one overarching issue with relatively low information costs: How big should the voucher amount (and associated tax) be? Morally, vouchers can implement any legitimate redistributive justice goal advanced by the current system while respecting an individual's right to make health care tradeoffs rather than imposing one tradeoff on everyone.

Although the "MedicarePlus" or "Medicare Choice" plans in the Medicare reform bill represent a move toward vouchers, they contain a troubling deviation. MedicarePlus plans are prohibited from allowing seniors to make their own choices about what services they want covered. They must instead cover everything that Medicare does. Taken literally, this is a disaster for the voucher concept. Expansionist pressures cannot be curbed, and cost-benefit tradeoffs cannot be made, if insurers must comply with Medicare's absolutist imperative. Moreover, such a system means the power to decide what services to buy is left not to individuals but to centralized governmental mandate.

Nonetheless, the GOP bill does set some limit on voucher amounts, which will no longer blindly follow cost increases as in an open-ended fee-for-service system. This means MedicarePlus plans will inevitably have to engage in the denial of some beneficial care. Even such implicit rationing should lead to more sensible allocation decisions than the current system. But allowing explicit rationing would make the choices available to the elderly more transparent, and so help them make more informed choices.

Perhaps Republicans made the political calculation that these imperfections are worth bearing for the soundbite that under their plan no one will receive fewer benefits than they do currently. But perhaps they may truly believe that greater efficiency can spare us the need to ration health care. It's a comforting delusion, but a dangerous one, for it obscures the real problem: our tragic failure to make choices limiting the beneficial health care we're willing to fund.

EINER ELHAUGE is Professor of Law at Harvard University.

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The tactics of Gingrich's red-meat frosh.

FRESHFELLAS

By Ruth Shalit

For months, House Appropriations Chairman Bob Livingston had been looking for an opportunity to rid himself of freshman congressman Mark W. Neumann. In committee discussions, in legislative mark-ups and on three major appropriations bills, the representative from Wisconsin had played the role of spoiler—voting against the Republican-backed legislation, then trumpeting his treachery in press releases. Early this year, when Neumann had seemed poised to vote against a supplemental Defense appropriations bill, Speaker Newt Gingrich lassoed him and dragged him back, threatening to remove him from the national security subcommittee. Neumann voted against the bill anyway. "I voted my conscience and will continue to do so no matter what," proclaimed the obstreperous freshman.

On October 11, chairman Livingston decided he'd had enough of Neumann's flapping jaw and perfidious ways. After Neumann bucked his leadership yet again, joining a rogue corps of freshmen in scuttling an omnibus military spending package, Livingston bounced him off the spending subcommittee for good. "At the start of the new Congress, Appropriations Committee members pledged to work in support of the panel's business," thundered Livingston in a press release. "We have tried very hard to address Mr. Neumann's concerns, yet he has refused to support the national security bill.... We need conferees who can get the committee's work done."

Word of Livingston's counterrevolutionary shenanigans flashed like lightning among the freshmen on the House floor. Representative Mark Souder got the news from an apoplectic Representative Linda Smith. "I went straight down to the well and found Roger Wicker, our class president," he said. "And I said, 'Roger, this can't happen. The roof is going to blow off this place.' " In a cramped, fluorescent-lit Xerox room in the basement of Longworth, the flustered frosh held an emergency class meeting to denounce Livingston and figure out how to get their classmate reinstated. At the behest of Representative Sue Myrick, the group decided to take their case straight to Gingrich. Spilling out on their leader's balcony, the freshmen told the bemused Speaker that "we were really hanging together on this," recalls Representative John Shadegg of Arizona. "We told the Speaker this was unacceptable; that it would not stand; that we had to work out a better deal for Mark." After vowing to hold up passage of an Agriculture appropriations bill, the freshmen extorted from their Speaker a promise that Neumann would be elevated to the prestigious House Budget Committee.

But that wasn't all. Neumann's press secretary hunkered down in Livingston's office until 4:00 in the morning, working out the terms of a remorseful new Livingston statement. "A press release that was sent from my office [yesterday] ... incorrectly implied that at the start of the 104th Congress I had exacted the pledge of all members of the Appropriations Committee to work in support of my agenda," whimpered the final version. "This is a completely false statement." The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee went on to heap blessings on Neumann's head. "Mark Neumann has never pledged to follow my agenda," the statement read. "Congressman Neumann has always been an independent voice on the Committee. Mark Neumann is a man of integrity and honor."

On Capitol Hill, the Neumann caper was viewed as merely the latest in a string of coups for an increasingly feisty freshman class. "We are the conscience of the revolution," says Representative Sam Brownback of Kansas, a ringleader among the radical Republican young. "The move against Mark was seen as a move against the class as a whole. And we responded."

The forty-strong splinter group of malcontents ranges from the stylish Sue Myrick of North Carolina, with her curlered hair and rose-sherbet suits, to Mark Souder of Indiana, a former Hill staffer with goggle-eyed glasses who announces himself in a phone call to a reporter: "Uh, hi, it's Mark." An earnest, strident bunch, they pepper their conversation with wonkish homilies and battle cries like "The revolution is in the reconciliation," and "We're here to make sure the status quo loses its status."

To be sure, Mark W. Neumann—a skinny, jug-eared millionaire homebuilder who bears an unfortunate resemblance to Alfred E. Neuman—is an improbable vessel for all this fervor. A gadfly isolationist who fiercely opposes sending U.S. troops to Bosnia, he is viewed by his peers with a kind of amused suspicion. In truth, the Neumann scuffle says less about Neumann's popularity

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than it says about the freshman class's newfound penchant for muscle-flexing and tub-thumping—even at the expense of their own leadership.

With the lockstep passage of the Contract a distant memory, beachheads of discontent and sedition are sprouting all over the Capitol. There's the Conservative Action Team (CATS), a strike force dominated by freshman radicals who meet once a week to counter the connivings of the centrist Lunch Bunch. Though the action team has so far been more talk than action, moderate Republicans are already jittery. As moderate Representative Connie Morella points out, the class of '94 is a very green flock: of the seventy-three new representatives, only twenty-six have any prior legislative experience at all. "Perhaps it's easier to eliminate something if you've never experienced it," says Morella optimistically. "They don't understand how the legislative service organizations enhance our knowledge of environmental and energy issues that come up. They haven't really worked with the Department of Commerce.... Perhaps they haven't heard what the NEA has done."

DAVID MCINTOSH, MARK NEUMANN AND SAM BROWNBACK
BY TAYLOR JONES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

There's also the Family Caucus, another freshman rump group whose invitation-only membership list is kept "strictly confidential," breathes Fount Holland, an aide to caucus president Tom Coburn. Members will admit they meet twice a month in a spare committee room, where they hash out their God-fearing agenda over doughnuts and coffee. Additional efforts to lift the veil of secrecy meet with mixed results. "It's really a very covert group," whispers an aide to one congressman rumored to be among the group's members. "No one has a list of its members. No one has a list of the steering committee. They have strict criteria for joining. You gotta be really hard-core. The overall notion is to quietly move along a family-friendly agenda. They're actually meeting right now." Here and there, the group's footprints can be spotted. It was members of the Family Caucus, for instance, who in September tacked onto a labor bill a provision censuring the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education for requiring OB-GYN programs to provide some abortion training. Next on the group's family-friendly agenda, according to several uncharacteristically loose-lipped members, is the imposition of a sanction on the National Education Association, which recently passed a resolution calling for a national gay and lesbian awareness month. "It's really interesting, with these guys," muses another aide. "They'll just—do stuff. They won't take any credit for it. It just gets done."

The most prominent freshman splinter group is the roughly thirty-strong New Federalists, led by Sam Brownback. New Feds monitor the results of House-Senate compromises, faxing warnings whenever leadership threatens to "negotiate away the conscience of the revolution," explains Mark Souder. He adds, somewhat defensively: "It's not braggadocio. It's not loud, it's not swaggering, it's not fractious. We're just doing what we said we'd do in our campaign. Why are we considered fractious for saying, 'Hey, let's keep our word'?"

Under Brownback's leadership, the New Federalists have advocated liquidating the legislative service organizations, the NEA and several congressional office buildings, which they want to palm off to the highest bidder. The broader aim, members say, is to maintain their revolutionary purity. The revolt against the status quo extends even to their lunch options: no catered meals. "If we meet over breakfast, we'll walk down to the cafeteria and buy bananas and doughnuts," Brownback says proudly. "If it's lunch, we'll pick up yogurt and a tuna salad. We do what anyone would do in America during a meeting called over mealtime. This idea of a royal Congress is dead."

What has been the outcome of all this frenetic caucusing and caballing? As Congress launches into budget reconciliation, the new crew has issued a list of "non-negotiables." First, Republicans have to meet their over-

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all budget savings targets. Second, the reconciliation package must balance the budget in seven years. Third on their wish list is a hefty tax cut. Fourth is the elimination of the Department of Commerce ("No reconciliation without elimination!" the freshmen chant.) The fifth "non-negotiable" is a controversial proposal, cosponsored by freshman David McIntosh, that would restrict lobbying efforts by nonprofit groups that receive federal money. Giddily, the freshmen vow they will band together to vote down the $23 billion Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill that funds, among other government entities, the White House staff—unless the "welfare for lobbyists" excision is included in the final package.

Amazingly, the fractious frosh may get everything they ask for. "We have created a dynamic that is the equivalent of a filibuster," says McIntosh. "If we stick together as a block, we can stop legislation from going through. That has given leadership the strength to embrace our issues, and the strength to sell them to a reluctant Senate and a reluctant president." The Speaker, for his part, is said to chortle at the antics of the young bucks. "Leadership tells us to keep putting the pressure on," says one House freshman. "Newt realizes that if you let loose a 300-pound gorilla, it's going to start throwing bananas at just about anybody—and that may include you from time to time."

Appropriations Chairman Bob Livingston is decidedly less amused. "It's culture shock," says one House freshman. "He's been watching the Democrats for decades. Now he's got the levers of power. And he'd like to use it the way his predecessors used it. Well, we don't want to play the game the way he might want to play it." When Tom Coburn, the Oklahoma obstetrician who heads up the Family Caucus, voted to shoot down a Defense appropriations bill, Livingston reportedly blew his stack. "He was upset," says one Republican House staffer. "He called Coburn that afternoon. He said, 'You're never going to get anything out of my committee again.' " Coburn, stunned, called up Majority Leader Dick Armey to remind him, according to one present, "that he can't be saying that to a member of our class"; that traditional strong-arm tactics wouldn't bow a "citizen congressman" who had delivered three babies only that weekend. Livingston apologized.

When McIntosh and a claque of other revolutionaries tried to attach their welfare-for-lobbyists provision onto the must-pass Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill, Livingston called Gingrich in California, where he was giving a speech at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. "He said, 'This damn thing is holding up the committee,' " says an aide to the Speaker. Following Gingrich's mediation, McIntosh called up Livingston and offered to act as a liaison to his classmates in shepherding the mammoth appropriations bill through the House—if only Livingston would let him attach his pet proposal. Livingston erupted. "He was yelling so loudly David had to hold the phone away from his ear," says one House Republican source. "He went nuts. He said, 'Leadership is paying too much attention to you.' " McIntosh was eventually granted his rider—with Livingston's full support.

The gravelly voiced Appropriations chairman, who has amassed one of the House's most conservative voting records, is said to view the freshman bombast as perilously divisive. "Ask yourself: Who is the opposition here?" argues one House Republican staffer. "If you're in the majority, your goal ought to be governing. Not going after the leadership of the House. Not when they happen to be the leaders of your own party." Others in the GOP leadership see it differently, pointing out that the freshmen's penchant for histrionics and martyrdom can be a useful bargaining chip. As many in the leadership concede, the $243 million military spending bill that Mark Neumann helped scuttle happened to be an overstuffed, pork-encrusted sop to the defense industry. "It was *The Bridge over the River Kwai*," sighs a top aide to the GOP leadership. "If you spend all this time trying to cut a bill into law, you can't see that the right thing to do, at the end of the process, is to blow it up."

By invoking the possibility of a freshman revolt, the leadership can also persuade Republican centrists that they have no choice but to bite the bullet. One Republican on the House Budget Committee recounts an anxious meeting in which Republican members crafted a plan to balance the federal budget in seven years. "It was tough, because even though the language was not binding, we needed to spell out specific spending cuts that would bring us to balance," he recalls. "And someone came up with a brilliant idea of how to fudge the numbers. The kind of thing that was done very commonly in the '80s." Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich promptly quashed that idea. "Kasich said, 'Whoa. We absolutely cannot do that. If we do smoke and mirrors and phony numbers, we are going to have a big, big freshman problem.' "

Of course, the freshmen don't win every battle. Last summer, Mark Neumann, that avatar of fiscal sanity, went a step too far. When the Interior appropriations bill came up on the floor of the House, Neumann offered an amendment that would have zeroed out $800,000 for efforts to save the elephants, tigers and rhinoceroses. "Some people here in Washington would have us believe that $800,000 is not worth worrying about," Neumann intoned. "[W]e could use these same tax dollars to keep 2,100 starving children alive ... rather than spend the money to preserve tigers, elephants and rhinos." Oops. Among the animal-friendly was, of course, the ever-surprising Newt Gingrich. "Frankly, I think [this amendment] is the kind of thing that occasionally we ought to just stop," fumed Gingrich. And they did: 132-289. Also voting nay were thirty-nine Republican freshmen. Suddenly, it seemed, they knew where to draw the line. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Assorted Crimes

It's amazing how drastically one reacts to the ebb and flow of good films. After seeing a good or even modestly good film, the very air in the street seems salubrious. But if a couple of weeks go by with nothing but poor films, it's Slough-of-Despond time—heavy with the conviction that there will never ever be a good film again.

Since there's recently been a patch of bleakness, not so very long actually, **Get Shorty** (MGM) is more welcome than it might otherwise be. It's only mildly entertaining; still, it breaks the black spell. Something like the gangster comedies that Cesar Romero and Milton Berle made in the '40s, where mayhem and murder were used for boffs, *Get Shorty* has humorous snap; and it has John Travolta.

Scott Frank's screenplay, from an Elmore Leonard novel, presents Travolta as a bagman for Florida loan sharks who gets in trouble, moves to Hollywood and tangles with the film business. The tangling involves Gene Hackman as a schlock horror-film producer, Rene Russo as his former star and present mistress, Danny DeVito as a Big Actor, Dennis Farina as a Florida hood and Delroy Lindo as his L.A. equivalent. Bette Midler, unbilled, is a widow who is hot for Hackman.

The mix-ups could be funnier; on the other hand, they could have been less funny. The same might be said about the deftness of Barry Sonnenfeld's direction. The film's clever production design is by Peter Larkin, who was a leading designer in the New York theater decades ago (*Ondine, Teahouse of the August Moon, Inherit the Wind*), has since been in film for decades (*Tootsie, Guarding Tess*), and is by now possibly the *doyen* of American designers.

Travolta, however, is the picture's mainstay. With his first starring appearance in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), he shone with unforced sweetness. It's still with him, eighteen years later, even in this crook role. I never understood why his career went into such absolute decline after a couple of ill-chosen roles, and one of my (few) debts of gratitude to Quentin Tarantino is that he brought Travolta back in *Pulp Fiction.*

Lately, in *A Month by the Lake,* we had a film based on a story by H.E. Bates in his lending-library mode. **Feast of July** (Touchstone) comes from a novel by Bates in his Thomas Hardy mode. In Christopher Neame's screenplay, a young woman in rural England, in 1883, wanders lonely and desolate through the mountains, has a miscarriage in a shed, trudges into a town and is taken in by a lamplighter. There she lives with him and his wife and three grown sons. There she recovers health and attractiveness, and there more trouble ensues.

Much effort is spent to give this story tragic depth, or at least the sense that the Moirai are relentlessly pursuing the young woman, but despite the fact that she is the cause of a murder, the story is never much more than an account of ill chance. At the end the young woman is off to Ireland and (as a caress of her belly is apparently meant to convey) is bearing a child. We are left wondering what the picture portends. Is she a woman who quite unintentionally brings discord wherever she stays? Is she bringing more to Dublin? Is *that* her tragic Fate? This thematic inconclusiveness keeps the film from being anything like a Hardyesque drama. (Also, I don't understand the title, which is Bates's.)

Embeth Davidtz, as the young woman, doesn't help a great deal. Davidtz first came into prominent view in *Schindler's List* as the Polish Jew whom the Nazi commandant selects as his maid—a shattering performance. She has since been given leading roles, and this has proved virtue's stern reward. She isn't—as yet, anyway—ready for the center. She lacks variety and resource. She is at her best when suffering, and even in that key, she soon reaches her limits.

Yet there are real, if lesser, rewards in the film. First, the clothes, designed by Phoebe de Gaye. She understands that the clothes of working people back then were few in number for any one person but often were better made than lots of clothes that lots of people wear today: hand-woven cloth, full and strong, careful tailoring to fit, durable for long use. (Once in England I met an old retired gamekeeper of the Duke of Bedford who was wearing a vested tweed suit made for him some thirty years before and which—this is a compliment—looked it. The gamekeeper told me that he'd only had one similar suit that his father had bought him when he was a youth. Those two suits were the only working clothes he had worn in his whole life.)

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Clockers. *Spike Lee wraps a fairly commonplace story of Brooklyn drug-dealing with pyrotechnical dazzle. Harvey Keitel, as a detective, and some young black actors shine in Lee's light. (Reviewed 10/2/95)* **Devil in a Blue Dress.** *L.A., 1948. Imitation Raymond Chandler but with a predominantly black cast, headed by Denzel Washington. Most interesting as a harbinger of Watts 1965 and Simpson 1995. (10/30/95)* **A Month by the Lake.** *Vanessa Redgrave vacationing at Lake Como, 1937. Blancmange—which is pleasant enough once in a while. (10/23/95)* **To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar.** *The script is not as good as the title. But Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes and John Leguizamo are excellent as three drag queens. (10/9/95)*—**SK**

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Then there are the faces. After the diet of faces we usually see on film and TV—Winona Ryder and Chris O'Donnell, for example—look at the lamplighter, Tom Bell, James Purefoy, Kenneth Anderson and Ben Chaplin, particularly the last. Those are human countenances, not enlarged images from a computer game. Gemma Jones, as the lamplighter's wife, has the right face for her wisdom and travail. Davidtz, too, though it's not an especially memorable face, at least has one.

For those who have been waiting frantically for the next film written by Joe Eszterhas, author of *Showgirls*, here—after a nail-biting two-week wait—is **Jade** (Paramount). As before, the Eszterhas method is to find a gimmick with sexual possibilities, then exploit the hell out of it. Here the gimmick is that a prosecutor has to investigate a murder suspect who was once his girlfriend and is now married to his best friend. The investigation shows that the woman has a sexual side that has hitherto been unrevealed. Boy, does Eszterhas reveal it.

The plot is creaky. Worse, most of the devices are stale. The scene is San Francisco, and there are car chases out of *Bullitt*; at tense moments there are close-ups of masks, out of 10,000 previous pictures; most of the police dialogue seems to be echoing in the theater from the crime picture that played there last week. The thick music by James Horner would suffocate our interest if there were any.

The director was William Friedkin, who back in the '70s showed some ingenuity with *The French Connection* and *The Exorcist* but not since. David Caruso is the prosecutor, raising yet again the question of what he's doing on the screen with that pudgy little face and that blah personality. His friend is Chazz Palminteri, again easily ingratiating. The woman is Linda Fiorentino, showing us once more that her chief talent—on screen—is for copulation. •

Spandau Ballet

BY IAN BURUMA

Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth by Gitta Sereny

(Knopf, 757 pp., $35)

Murder is sexy. People cannot get enough vicarious pleasure from the wickedness of others. Evil is interesting because taboos are broken and moral restraints removed; and so many of us would like to know what it feels like to be truly bad. That is how killers become media stars. The Japanese student in Paris who murdered his girlfriend with a shotgun, carved her up, stewed her flesh and ate her is a favored guest on the Tokyo chat-show circuit, where he is asked the same question over and over: What was it like? No less than six writers are currently working on books about the British serial killers Fred and Rosemary West and one of them promised that his book would allow the reader "to rub shoulders with wickedness. It will open doors."

If someone were to discover Heinrich Himmler's diaries, publishers and magazines would spend fortunes to buy the rights. I would be surprised if the same were to be true of, say, Albert Schweitzer's diaries. Who cares what it feels like to do good? We are all supposed to do good. But there is also something else at work here. By presenting evil-doers as extraordinary characters, we put a safe distance between us and them. Writing about the Auschwitz trials in the 1960s, the German novelist Martin Walser pointed out that with every sensational revelation in the newspapers, Germans felt further removed from the men standing trial. A notorious butcher named Boger was identified in the press as "the beast"; and this separated him not only from his fellow Germans, but from all of mankind. The defendants became freaks, to be described with the same fascination that inspired Victorians to gawk at the Elephant Man and other unfortunates displayed in carnival tents.

Evil is never banal, but the men and women who do evil things are often ordinary. Killing hundreds of thousands with the stroke of a pen is not a banal activity, but Adolf Eichmann was not a freak. He was not even very interesting. And yet we want him

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to be interesting. We want to know what peculiar flaw in his character made him do it, what made him different from other people. To discover that there was no peculiar flaw would be hard to bear, for that would mean he could be one of us.

Gitta Sereny has spent her writing life fretting over the question of "what made them do it." She wrote a book about a murderous child named Mary Bell and a book about Franz Stangl, the *Kommandant* of Sobibor and Treblinka. Her new book, which took many years to complete, is a lengthy discussion of Albert Speer, the man who prolonged Hitler's war by being an efficient administrator of slave labor. Speer is an object of special fascination for students of evil because of his gentlemanly background and thoughtful demeanor. You wonder what a nice man like Speer was doing in the company of thugs.

Joachim Fest, in *The Face of the Third Reich*, described this sense of wonder:

> He [Speer] always seemed a stranger, as though he had wandered in by mistake among all these Machiavellian or booty-hungry petty bourgeois, and even his appearance showed how far he was from the type that embodied the National Socialist movement at all levels: the brown-uniformed political leader who, with broad neck and seat, stood firm in his own toughly trained fat and noisily, humorlessly and violently pursued his own interests along with those of the "National Revolution." Education, intelligence and also unusual firmness of character made Speer a genuine exception.

There is a degree of snobbery in this line of thought, as if petty bourgeois with thick necks are more likely to be "Machiavellian" or "booty-hungry," or to pursue their own interests in a brutal dictatorship, than educated men with thin necks.

Gitta Sereny got to know Speer, and like many people who knew him, including some of his judges at Nuremberg, she was charmed. Zhou Enlai, the gentleman at Mao's vicious court, had the same effect on people. The burghers among the thugs seem to restore our faith in humanity. Zhou shielded some people from the worst brutalities of the Cultural Revolution; Speer saved Germany and the occupied countries from Hitler's destructive mania in 1945. It is reassuring, perhaps, that some men can behave honorably in the midst of barbarism. And it is tempting to forgive such men for having aided, promoted and benefited from that same barbarism. The contrast between Speer's smooth conduct and the whining insolence of his fellow defendants might well have saved his neck at Nuremberg. As Sereny says, "the quiet, civilized Speer with his ready admission of responsibility must have seemed a godsend to the Chief U.S. Prosecutor."

Speer continued to charm men and women in jail, and after he was freed. One of the most important people to pop up later in Speer's life, when he had become a famous author and talk-show guest, forever carrying the albatross of the Third Reich around his slender neck, was a rabbi named Raphael Geis. Rabbi Geis wrote Speer a letter, quoted in Sereny's book:

> In 1963 I read G.M. Gilbert's *Nuremberg Diary*, and after that I thought of you time and time again. You were different from the other accused at the Nuremberg trial and I found the sentence you were given too severe.... Not long ago I saw parts of two of your TV interviews and was again impressed by you. You will have to go on bearing your lot, as I and the survivors must bear ours. But I did want to tell you that even where I don't understand you, I respect you....

There is no doubt that Speer must have looked out of place among the drunken louts in Hitler's entourage, such as Sepp Dietrich or Robert Ley. He was soft-spoken, well-mannered, well-dressed and well-educated: a *bon bourgeois*. And he was neither more nor less anti-Semitic than most people of his age and background, that is to say, he was fairly but not murderously anti-Semitic. He wrote to his daughter Hilde that "as far as practicing anti-Semitism or even uttering anti-Semitic remarks, my conscience is entirely clear. I really had no aversion to them, or rather, no more than the slight discomfort all of us sometimes feel when in contact with them...."

Yet Speer was responsible for a slave labor program that made use, in 1944, of 280,000 concentration camp prisoners. When a transport of Hungarian Jews turned up for work in Auschwitz, Speer was annoyed because they were all useless women, children and old men. To make up for this hitch, he ordered the arrest of 90,000 workers from the east by immediate "special action." They were put in concentration camps, and assigned to hard labor in underground bunkers for airplane and missile construction.

Sereny gives the account of a French prisoner named Dora who worked in the underground missile factory: the slaves saw daylight once a week, their lungs were burnt by ammonia dust, they worked eighteen hours a day, there was no drinking water ("you lapped up liquid and mud as soon as the SS had their backs turned"), and the guards had fun pushing the men into the makeshift latrines ("we all had dysentery. They laughed and laughed when we tried to get up and out of the shit..."). Speer visited this hellish place once. He didn't like what he saw. Still, he told Sereny that his "objection to maltreatment was because it could not increase efficiency; it was not a moral issue for me. Now I can't even conceive of such conditions, or of feeling or reacting as I did then."

An enigma, then, this Albert Speer. Sereny set herself to solve it. She felt that neither the Nuremberg trial nor his books really told us "how a man of such quality could become not immoral, not amoral but, somehow infinitely worse, morally extinguished." Why did Speer feel and react as he did? What flaws in his character had turned this genteel fellow into a monster? Her book is nothing if not thorough. Sereny is an intelligent and painstaking interviewer, letter-reader and archive-burrower. Her technique is not without an element of self-importance, and sometimes she sounds like an anthropologist who is proud of being the only one to have been taken into the tribal chief's trust. The way she did it—her walks with Speer in the woods, their intimate dinners at his home, her firmness with him and her tenderness toward him—are all part of her story. She established a special rapport with Speer, his wife, Margret, his daughter Hilde and an extended cast of characters in Speer's life.

Through Sereny's tireless sleuthing, we find out a great deal about the man. He had an unhappy childhood. His mother preferred his elder brother Hermann. His father, whom he "revered," was more interested in Ernst, the youngest son. Ernst and Hermann used to beat Albert up. And his parents did not get along. In fact, Speer told Sereny, "Now that I think of it, it's true: the only warmth I ever felt at home was from our French governess, Mlle Blum. She was Jewish, you know."

Sereny paints a picture of an emotionally blocked man. He had "hidden his inner life—much of which revolved around his love-hate for his mother—even from himself...." There was, she writes, "a dimension missing in him, a capacity to feel which his childhood had blotted out, allowing

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him to experience not love but only romanticized substitutes for love." Pity, compassion, sympathy and empathy

> were not part of his emotional vocabulary. He could feel deeply, but only indirectly—through music, through landscape, through art, eventually through visual hyperbole, often in settings of his own creation: his Cathedral of Light, the flags, the thousands of men at attention motionless like pillars, the blond children, rows upon rows of them with shining eyes and arms stiffly raised. This became beauty to him and, another substitute for love, allowed him to *feel.*

Not surprisingly, given all these blond children and masculine pillars, Speer seems to have had a sexual problem, too. Although attractive to women, he was incapable of sensual love, at least until the last days of his life. He loved Hitler, of course, as an omnipotent father figure, as a fellow-artist and a fellow-dreamer; and Sereny postulates that there was an erotic element in their oddly exalted relationship. Speer certainly appears to have felt more romantic about his Führer than about his wife, who comes across as a melancholy woman. Always in the cold shadow of her usually absent husband, she had been happiest at Berchtesgaden, where the skiing was good and evenings at Hitler's fireside *gemütlich*—"he was always very gallant to women, very Austrian."

Now all this is very interesting, but does it explain very much? There are many people with unhappy childhoods and emotional problems, but the overwhelming majority of them do not end up running slave labor programs or building stadiums for murderous dictators. Sereny comes up with plausible psychological answers, but did she ask the right questions? There is a big difference, after all, between a serial killer in a relatively decent society and an accomplice to mass murder in the Third Reich. Jeffrey Dahmer was abnormal by the standards of the society he lived in, and so finding out what made him break the norms can be a useful exercise. But in Hitler's Germany Speer was not abnormal. He was an ambitious technocrat doing a job to the best of his ability. He may have been an opportunist and a conformist, but so are most people. In the Third Reich, however, it was the non-conformists, the resisters, who broke the norm, not the S.S. men who did their "duty," or the bureaucrats who made sure the trains ran on time.

Perhaps Sereny is right that Hitler was able to cast a spell on Speer because the latter was a "repressed romantic." But even without delving deeply into Speer's psyche, his attraction to a man of unlimited power is not so hard to imagine. In 1933, Speer was an obscure 28-year-old architect who had designed the setting for a Nazi rally in Berlin. Like all successful despots, Hitler knew how to manipulate his courtiers by granting and then withdrawing emotional favors. Now one would be given the idea that he was special to the Führer, and now the other. The courtiers fought, like jealous children, for Hitler's affection.

Suddenly, one day in 1933, Hitler singled out Speer for special attention. Speer would remember the occasion for the rest of his life. This is what he told Sereny:

> "Can you imagine this?," said Speer. "Here I was, young, unknown and totally unimportant, and this great man, for whose attention—just for one glance—our whole world competed, said to me, 'Come and have lunch.' I thought I'd faint."

One lunch with the great man turned into many more lunches, until the young architect was a favored diner from Hitler's spoon. And the other courtiers

> began to treat me, who at twenty-eight was younger than any of them, like 'somebody'... I just accepted—gratefully, I think, rather than as my due—that I was going to have a wonderful life, wonderful beyond any dreams.

Yes, one can imagine it. Even the most odious tyrants know how to charm by flattery; that is one of the tricks of their trade. If there is a lesson in this, it is political more than psychological, and it is that intellectuals and technocrats are easily seduced by power—the power to carry out their ideas. Higher education, fine manners and technical expertise do not provide moral barriers against working for powers that are wicked. Quite the contrary. Educated men know better how to rationalize their collaboration and to look away from unpleasantness that might disturb their sleep. Think of all the doctors, the scientists, the lawyers, the professors, the orchestra conductors and the architects who worked for Hitler. The lesson is that the fine people must be subject to the same political checks and balances as the thugs.

Did Speer ever learn his lesson? His public penitence after the war suggests that he did. But a letter that he wrote to

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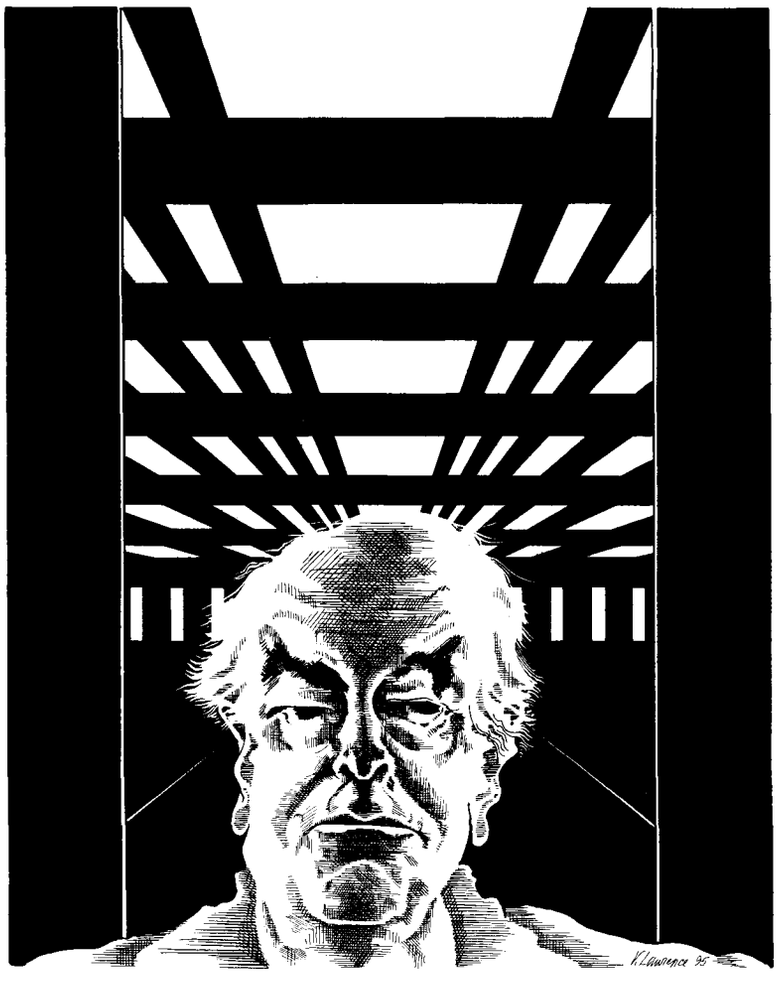
his son-in-law from Spandau suggests otherwise: "On your level—of the intellectual—ethical requirements are established with this level of human beings in mind. It seems right to me that an elite demands of itself elite ethics. But it is right only as long as you are aware you are being perhaps intolerably elitist, virtually excluding 99 percent of the human race." The idea that an educated man, an intellectual, should have different ethics from other people is odd; but it is positively sinister in the light of some of the things Speer told Sereny. After Speer described the hardship of his prison life in Nuremberg, Sereny asked him whether he was ever reminded of the slave workers' suffering in the Krupp camps or in Dora. He said that he was not, but was baffled by the question. Did she think he had been? She answered that she didn't. He asked her why not. She said: "Because even in the worst circumstances, you wouldn't have thought of yourself on the same or a similar plane." He agreed that this had been true then. "I can only hope it is no longer true."

These little exchanges alone make Sereny's book worth reading. The story of how Speer coped with his past is more interesting than psychological speculations on why he became a Nazi. For Speer was always a canny operator. Leni Riefenstahl thought that Speer's *mea culpa*—or *nostra culpa*—at Nuremberg was part of a calculated act to impress the judges, but that may say more about Riefenstahl than about Speer. Still, it is clear that Speer was always conscious of his audience. That is why he wrote so many books, made so many television appearances, saw so many journalists. There is no reason to assume that Speer's soul-searching in Spandau, with the help of priests, letters and theological books, was insincere, but he was always working on his public presentation as well.

Some of Sereny's most valuable insights come from her close reading of the various manuscripts of Speer's own accounts. In his famous book, *Inside the Third Reich*, Speer hardly mentions his role in mobilizing slave labor, the crime for which he was convicted. He blames all the nastiness on Fritz Sauckel, the man who actually ran the forced labor program. And he points out how at odds the two men were. But in an earlier draft, written in prison, Speer said he had done "everything to support [Sauckel] and his new authority." Quite a difference.

Speer's public persona was that of a decent, remorseful man who bore the collective responsibility for the Nazi regime while maintaining that he had never known the worst. At Nuremberg he pleaded not guilty, but accepted responsibility. He admitted that he had sensed something bad was happening to the Jews, without ever knowing quite what it was. In a chilling interview on BBC television in 1976, he said: "I can't say I didn't know it had happened.... I was only astonished by *how* it had happened ... the way it was done." Gassing must have struck him as fearfully uncivilized. He could live with himself as a reformed technocrat who had served a wicked master, but not as a knowing accomplice to mass murder.



ALBERT SPEER BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It is to Sereny's credit that she chipped away at Speer's protective shell, and occasionally managed to reveal a crack. One of the most visible cracks was Himmler's infamous speech to Nazi leaders in Posen. On October 6, 1943, Himmler revealed the plan to exterminate the Jews. There was a lot of heavy drinking that night among the *Gauleiter*, and they were not the most fastidious of types. Speer was there, too. He addressed his colleagues in the morning. Yet he always maintained that he had missed Himmler's speech by leaving in the afternoon. And so he didn't know, he couldn't have known. But this was such a sore point that he got two friends to sign affidavits in the 1970s to prove he hadn't been there. Here Sereny's sleuthing pays off. She discovered that Speer pressed his friends into endorsing his version of the events. And there are odd contradictions in his story. She concludes that Speer was lying, to himself as much as to his public: "The fact is that the more Speer tries to explain away awkward facts, the clearer it is that he is trying desperately to avoid facing the truth. There is simply no way Speer can have failed to know about Himmler's speech, whether or not he actually sat through it."

Even though Sereny's book suffers from a rambling, disjointed structure, there is a narrative running through that is supposed to end in a catharsis. Her mission, like that of George Casalis, the French priest in Spandau, is "to help [Speer] confront the truth." It is a very Christian idea that a person can work his or her way into God's grace through an anguished show of contrition. But Sereny wanted more: the years of chipping away at Speer's armor, the hundreds of hours of intellectual sparring, all the psychoanalysis and memory-probing were meant to lead, inexorably, as in a detective story, to a confession. Sereny thinks that she succeeded. I am less sure. If she did succeed in coaxing a confession, it was not quite the confession for

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which she was looking.

In Spandau, Speer asked Casalis to help him become a "different man." The old Speer, the slave-driving Speer, had to be replaced by a better Speer. Casalis and Sereny were curiously alike in their respective roles. For she, too, was a kind of moral therapist. She wanted Speer to be a better man. She was moved by his torment. "I reached the conclusion," she writes, "that, much harder than 'blocking' the truth, which in its most extreme form can mean no longer being consciously aware of lying, Speer was living a lie, saw no way of ending it and—I think his one great merit—suffered atrociously under it."

The assumption is that unblocking Speer's denial of conscious complicity in the Holocaust would have made him a better, and presumably happier, man. To find happiness and salvation, Speer had to face the painful truth. His shell had to be demolished. Speer had to be unblocked. Blocking—emotional, sexual, social—is what made him such a flawed man in the first place, if Sereny's analysis is to be believed. Owing to these flaws, he supped with the devil. And now he had the chance of becoming a different, better man by telling the truth to a Protestant chaplain and a sympathetic historian.

The great confession for which Sereny was hoping, the climax of her story, the turning point on the couch of truth, the return to God's grace, is supposed to have come about in April 1977. Speer received a letter from one D. Diamond, director of the South African (Jewish) Board of Deputies. Diamond wanted to prevent the publication in South Africa of a pamphlet denying the Holocaust. To help this cause, he asked Speer to affirm on oath that there was a plan to exterminate the Jews and that Speer had known about it. Speer wrote a letter back, saying that "to this day I still consider my main guilt to be my tacit acceptance of the persecution and the murder of millions of Jews."

When Sereny was about to quote this letter in a profile of Speer to be published in the German magazine *Die Zeit*, he wanted her to add a footnote, explaining what he had meant by "tacit acceptance." It meant, he said, "looking away, not by knowledge of an order or its execution." The wording is awkward, but the meaning seems clear: again Speer was taking responsibility for the crime in general, without admitting that he knew about it specifically. Still, Sereny was not a greedy mother-confessor. She accepted it as the breakthrough that enabled her to finish her long quest on a dramatic note: "If Speer had said as much in Nuremberg, he would have been hanged."

But then comes a fascinating postscript, perhaps the most interesting twist in the story. In 1981, two years after the article (with footnote) appeared in *Die Zeit*, Speer wrote Sereny to complain. How could she have been so insensitive? She was just like "those others," who were always trying to judge him. And the letter was followed by a telephone call. He sounded happy and drunk. He boasted that he really hadn't done too badly. After all, he said, "I *was* Hitler's architect; I *was* his Minister of Armaments and Production; I *did* serve twenty years in Spandau and, coming out, *did* make another good career. Not bad after all, was it?"

Sereny was astonished. Who was this man? Definitely not the Albert she knew. What had happened to him? An experience, he said. He would tell her all about it later. What had happened was that Albert, the new Albert, at the age of 75, had found sexual love at last. A young German woman, married to an Englishman, had fallen in love with Speer after reading his prison diaries. She believed in him, worshiped him and refused to ask him painful questions about guilt and Jews and all that nasty business. What had happened was that Albert was finally unblocked. Sereny sorrowfully concludes that by freeing Speer from his questioning self, his young lover had killed what was best in him. But she also has to admit "how liberated he must have felt when it happened."

So who was the real Speer? The blocked and ruthless technocrat, who forced thousands of slaves to work themselves to death? The gentleman at Nuremberg, who took responsibility for the regime he served? The tormented soul-searcher, who wanted to become a different man? The traveling salesman of *nostra culpa*? Or the old man who found sex and the satisfaction of knowing he had got away with life pretty nicely after all? Perhaps he was all these things. It depended on which Speer you wanted to see. Sereny saw a good man wrestling with his conscience. That was the man, she believes, "he would have become again." We shall never know for sure. Weeks after that telephone call to Sereny, Speer died in his lover's arms in a hotel room.

IAN BURUMA is the author of *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

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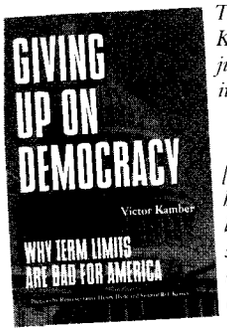

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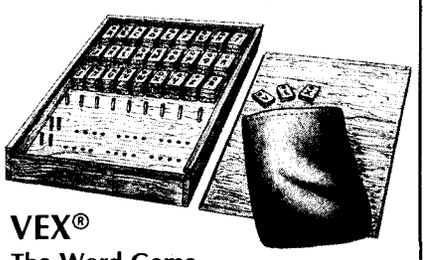

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Symphony in B

BY ANNE HOLLANDER

Following Balanchine by Robert Garis

(Yale University Press, 260 pp., $30)

Following Balanchine is a work of great distinction, although it is very hard to read. Truly valuable and precise books about art are rare enough, but much rarer is a satisfying book about the exact character and importance of serious criticism. This short and aptly illustrated study is both. It is also a species of autobiography, a personal memoir, a private revelation, a kind of confession, ostensibly because Robert Garis believes that true criticism is born of personal feeling, and you can't describe the one without the other. But besides that, he is profoundly interested in himself. Writers have created masterpieces out of such an interest, but you need a lot of tact to make it work, and this writer's ability to make us share his self-absorption is variable. He is very good at searching his own feelings and memory to illustrate small critical moments and large critical perceptions, but he is less good at presenting himself apart from these, when he often seems to indulge in that insufferable habit, oblique boasting in the guise of ruthless honesty. We especially don't need this when it's beside the excellent point that he uses himself to make.

With detailed intensity, Garis describes the way in which he followed the work of George Balanchine since first encountering *Apollo* in 1945, when he was about 19, until the choreographer's death in 1983. Notably Garis has not wished to use anything like the same detail or intensity to track Balanchine back into history for our sakes: this is not a biography, even an artistic biography. Nor does Garis bring such passionate attention to considering critically the independent life of Balanchine's great works, to imagining them in other contexts beyond his own direct personal judgment engendered from his own experience. Instead he uses his immense powers of concentration to track his own perceptions into the past, into earliest childhood before he knew anything about ballet, to elucidate for us the process and materials out of which a dedicated critic was made, and then to show how he eventually came to flourish on the inspiring nourishment a particular great artist provided. It is, and it was meant to be, an exemplary tale.

Garis traces Balanchine's development through forty years by telling the story of how his own critic's heart and mind were confirmed and reconfirmed in their calling by Balanchine's genius. To do this, Garis makes a sustained critical demonstration out of the whole text, at the same time describing how it was possible to do it and how it was done. The somewhat mesmerizing result actually requires not reading but study. It is almost immediately clear that this author is not only a dedicated critic, he is also a devoted teacher—and that he would perhaps even prefer, like Miss Jean Brodie, to be a leader.

He makes the case for following him very compelling; and yet he also shows that it's impossible—he will always be way ahead. We can't be him, with his daily, weekly, yearly attendance at the ballet that kept him in such close touch with the most delicate workings of Balanchine's imagination, whether technical and practical or emotive and allusive. But that's not how he really means us to follow him. His tale is exemplary with respect to how performing art should be experienced and judged, not how often it should be attended, although these things are obviously related.

Performance is indeed the point in this book; and in this form of art criticism. Garis's attachment to art began with music and novels, went on to opera, theater and movies, only finally reaching ballet in the work of Balanchine, and finding other dance performances because of him. It is significant that Garis has remained the serious exponent only of the temporal arts, where all works have a beginning, a trajectory and an end, perhaps enclosed within an overture and a coda or an introduction and an epilogue, the opening credits and The End. Since they can only be followed in sequence from left to right or from first to last, such works must be undertaken and apprehended as journeys, no matter in what fragmentary circumstances they were actually composed. They represent the movement of life through time, as a quest with a duration, phrasing and an outcome unknown at the start. They suggest that some lives are suites of dances, some are one long, slow struggle, others are short, bitter farces. And the separate sections of such works have the same temporal cast, just like the separate parts of lives and journeys—there may be different companions, different speeds and rhythms in each, unforeseeable resolutions and changes of key, but no escape from the sequential mode. Art and life are shown to have a common onward pull. Perception and criticism require the intimate apprehension of a *process*.

A work of literature can only sit there in print, ready to be ingested piecemeal or at random, and it thus permits some detachment on the part of the reader, a choice about how to take it in. Operas are recorded and listened to in fragments in irrelevant contexts and bits of films may be excised and enjoyed in videotic privacy, though it's of course understood that the real work of art is the whole trip, *Parsifal* from start to finish, *Our Mutual Friend* from beginning to end, the uncut whole of *Les Enfants du Paradis*, all three parts of Dante's *Commedia*. But with any of these, the point now is that there are mass-produced copies, and with operas, different performances in mass-produced copies (if the music is all you want). Lovers of all such works have easy private access to all of them or to parts of them at will, with control of how to permit their effects to work.

So far, dance is not really the same (except for movie-dancė, made on screen terms). You have to be there, to see it all and follow it through, to share in its precarious immediacy and feel the intense physical identification that it demands from its watchers. In performance, theater and opera naturally have the same immediacy as dance; but operas and plays always have their texts, just as chamber music does. Whatever the violinist, the actor and the singer may do, they produce only a version. The original is safe inside its words and its score, forever potential as a vehicle for performers, but perfect only on the page. Dance is wordless and scoreless. Traditionally it has been taught from dancer to dancer, from choreographer to dancer, from body to body, because although notation systems exist, they are always insufficient. Dance is too much like play, or like ritual, or like life. In the work of a great choreographer such as Balanchine, all of what Garis repeatedly calls the "inflections"—

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the most delicate tonal effects the artist's decisions produce—depend entirely on the soul and body of the individual dancer at the moment of execution. There is nothing else. The moment of a critic's perception must be equally immediate, and the memory a direct echo of that instant.

Thus, although he made excellent ballets for the Diaghilev dancers and the Ballet Russe dancers, Balanchine's greatness was ultimately confirmed for the world only through his hands-on creative thought and work with his own forever developing group of dancers, who were perpetually being trained and chosen and cast by him in the repertory he built for the New York City Ballet, using as a source the School of American Ballet, which was also tailored for his use. Some of this repertory included works that he had made years before, like *Apollo* itself, all of which he re-created for the new dancers in the new ballet universe he was inventing. But all of his finished ballets were also transmuted whenever he used a different cast, especially different principal dancers, who set the tone and bring the whole work into focus. The crucial flavor and texture would shift slightly, aspects of the music would emerge as having a different emotive character. During his long career at the New York City Ballet, Garis tells us, Balanchine was present at every performance of every one of his ballets until the end of his life—always working, never losing contact with it and with them, his eye on the life of his art each and every time, the whole time.

Photo © 1994 Martha Swope

GEORGE BALANCHINE AND VIOLETTE VERDY, 1961

That's the standard: he had to be there, and so do we. And so did Garis, following every step of the dance, every change of the cast. He wants to make clear that the work of acute personal action that goes into the creation of a performing art must be echoed by the work of acute personal receptivity in the viewer: distance and calculation are not indicated. Good critical judgment can only be filtered through "exhilaration," a vibrant recognition of the artist's thought in progress (which includes the dancer's performance, or the singer's), an apprehension of what Garis calls the work's "identity," which illuminates the consciousness of the viewer as the piece unfolds on a given occasion. "Appreciation"—that is, knowing that the work is supposed to be good or bad, and accordingly standing back to try to approve or disapprove of it—is essentially at odds with this transfigured condition, which is required for perceiving the shades of a work's real excellence and the exact flavor of its deficits. Before you can really know it, it must enter and inhabit you. Only then can your appreciative skills be put to any good use, or make any real sense.

Garis tells how, very early in life, he learned to recognize such transforming moments in himself and allow them to occur, and to distinguish them from mere progress in the sterile quest for approval and self-approval that by itself leads only to joyless expertise. He reports with precise candor his adolescent progress in seizing on music and literature with the ferocity of a contender (he was no good at sports), eager to win, wanting to like what was known to be good and for all the right reasons, checking himself out against prevailing opinion, following out its prejudices in the teeth of direct evidence until he learned better, always fighting for his views. Later we find him pursuing a standard path through recorded Glyndebourne productions of Mozart, rejecting certain performances for snobbish reasons without even listening to them, respecting others without exactly feeling the reasons why he should.

By 19, the young Garis was inwardly prepared. He was hearing a live performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Metropolitan when Licia Albanese sang "*Deh vieni, non tardar*," and he experienced his first artistic epiphany in the born-again mode. He fell in love with that music at that moment, accepting it totally without reservation, preparation or rationalization. At last he could recognize this true ravishment as quite different from all the musical knowledge and operatic sophistication he had been pursuing:

> My surprised reaction to Albanese's *Deh vieni* still seems to me the sine qua non, the experience without which I would never have become more than officially and generally involved in music instead of personally involved, and the same kind of thing was soon to happen with Balanchine. Before seeing any of his ballets I was ready to approve and like his work. I was even ready to fight for it, since I had conceived of him from my reading as a great artist whom it took unusually fine and bold and unconventional taste to admire. And yet my first experience with Balanchine was as powerful as my first experience of *Figaro* and as surprising. I had anticipated approving and loving *Apollo*, but I had not expected to be helplessly overcome by it to the point of shedding tears at the apotheosis....

Critical ambition and authentic pleasure could finally combine, and yield eventual self-knowledge and a satisfying life, not just a successful career. This sort of candid self-appraisal is good to read, along with the other confessions throughout of failure of nerve or will or joy along the critical path. Garis shows the training of artistic judgment to be vulnerable to weakness of spirit and character, not just to aesthetic misperceptions. False steps in perception can never cease to come from instances of pride or vanity, which forever threaten to cloud the judgment and to produce the need for new conversions. Under it all is the desire to be a true judge, to seek the truth of art directly. By

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this means, it is implied, even character might improve.

Garis goes on to unfold his critical journey through Balanchine's career as if it were the core of his own life, relating all personal encounters and relations and professional experiences to this unswerving passion and detailed preoccupation. To keep his responsive balance, he refrained from trying to know the dancers or the choreographer personally, or from taking any ballet training himself. He is proud of not knowing the technical terminology. Such ignorance seems to ensure that he keep his eye and heart fresh for the direct perception of Balanchine's work, untainted by the poisonous enjoyment of inside dope.

During all this time, Garis became a distinguished critic and professor of literature, and eventually wrote and taught about theater and movies as well as ballet. But the autobiographical material about all this is here presented as if it fell into line behind Garis's practice of active critical love upon Balanchine's art. The flavor of this practice as he describes it is indeed musical, functioning as a sort of pedal-point, or an underlying private song unfolding its delicious unpredictable phrases to accompany or even to direct the progress of living, with all other critical and practical or emotional work undertaken on the model of this intimate, constant and satisfactory effort.

Notably, Garis had no earlier experience with ballet at all. He discovered Balanchine and ballet at the same time, and he is not the only literary critic to do so, nor the only music-lover. I think of Richard Poirier and Irving Howe, who got interested in the art of ballet through the exfoliated modern version single-handedly created by Balanchine, the version that for the first time patently aspired to the condition of music. On Balanchine's stage the bodies of ballet dancers came to be liberated from the chains of spectacle and pantomime, while the course of their stage behavior through any work was no longer weighted by the demands of an externally applied plot. The dancers could manifestly enact pure human situations through a ballet vocabulary that was newly honed, deepened and expanded expressly for the purpose, and composed into works of unadulterated artistic exploration, like poems. And there lay the secret.

Balanchine knew how to transform traditional ballet into modern ballet without dreaming of abolishing its basic formal character, in the manner of those revolutionaries who wished to escape ballet's strictures by throwing ballet out entirely and reinventing dance, thus assuming the risk of looking quite ridiculous. I believe Balanchine's works were so deeply satisfactory to modern literary people because they were clearly created in a supple and seasoned traditional language. He was making new and cogent and believable use of old rules that had already been repeatedly modified, refined and strengthened, tempered by fire and time like those of the French or the English in the making of their forever-modernizing literatures. Musical language had had a similar trajectory of perpetual reform by inspired innovators. Ballet could be modernized by Balanchine because he understood how to take advantage of its evolving matrix, to perceive ballet as infinitely elastic rather than rigidly confining.

He didn't need to throw anything out, only move on with a reformed purpose and new ideas, as the famous ballet-masters of the past—Noverre, Bournonville, Perrot, Ivanov, Petipa, Fokine—had always done. Certain kinds of scenery and costumes had to go, so as to leave the character of the reconceived dance more clearly intelligible, and to emphasize the distinct body and talent of each dancer. This time, in the formally integrative modern period, Balanchine could move on to bring ballet into a newly ambitious relation to music, where each could illuminate the other's character and neither detract from the other's power. Representational and narrative effects, what Whistler called "clap-trap," were strictly subordinated to formal considerations. The formal stakes were thus sharply raised, since the form itself became responsible for conveying the drama. Balanchine would say to each dancer, "Don't act! Just dance the part!" The dance and the individual body would do it all.

Garis deals wonderfully with the long relationship of Balanchine and Stravinsky, two Imperial Russians-turned-Americans-via-Paris, twenty years apart in age. Both were youthful stars of the Diaghilev enterprise, at opposite ends of its astounding course during the early years of this century, with some overlap in the '20s. Later the two collaborated in America—producing, among other works, *Card Game*, *Orpheus* and *Agon*, with various reworkings of *Firebird*, *Le Baiser de la Fée* and *Apollo*—and Balanchine set several Stravinsky works not meant for dance. Garis shows how Balanchine had to deal with Stravinsky's idea of what a musical ballet scenario should be, and he thinks that Balanchine could not always fully express himself through it. The occasional dulled-down result, under Garis's intense gaze, could seem like Balanchine trashing his own ideas, when he found himself dissatisfied with what he had first done (as in the case of a reworked *Orpheus*) and wished visibly to destroy it rather than be seen to have allowed his choreography to succumb to Stravinsky's plan for it.

Garis thinks that Balanchine came to feel his own choreographic imagination to be at odds with the composer's idea of ballet music—and this composer was a past master fully confident that a choreographer's purpose was to produce a dance version of the composer's score, not to make an independent work of choreographic art that might open the music beyond itself. Stravinsky, despite his relentless modernity, had been brought up knowing the Imperial Ballet tradition, where there was no choreographer by that name, only a ballet-master who by definition arranged stage dances to fit stage music, as courtiers had once danced formal dances to court music.

Balanchine had been a full-course student at the Imperial School of Music in St. Petersburg after finishing his ballet training, and his father and brother were musicians. He understood music perfectly, but his genius was for choreography, with no thought that it was the servant of the composer. He had choreographed to Bach and Mozart as well as Bizet and Tchaikovsky, using works that had never been intended for the stage. Stravinsky was offering his highest praise when he said about his *Agon* score that "George will compose a matching choreographic construction. He is a master at this." He obviously felt, Garis believes, that the music was "a sort of assignment for the choreographer." But Balanchine eventually converted him. Later on Stravinsky was to say that Balanchine's art "explored" his music, as it clearly did that of so many other composers.

To a lover of Balanchine who arrived there by an entirely different route, Garis's account has an alien cast. He refers to himself as "interested in the arts" from the age of 10 or 11, but it was an interest founded on the power of music, never straying far from that deep stream into which can be troped the whole enterprise of film, novels and poetry, with ballet and opera linked to them all by the musical skein, the phenomenon of the structure developing through time. Absent from all of this is any pictorial art, the art that bursts on the eye all at once—except one irritating remark about having always preferred Géricault to Delacroix, with no further comment, a vain utterance that he ought

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to have resisted. Of himself Garis reports no moments under the spell of an apparition that proposes an alternative universe, or in front of an image in which all movement is entirely illusory, built into the charged dynamics of the motionless picture, or where the artist's thought must be perceived in layers, in the tension between alternatively or equally vivid figure and ground.

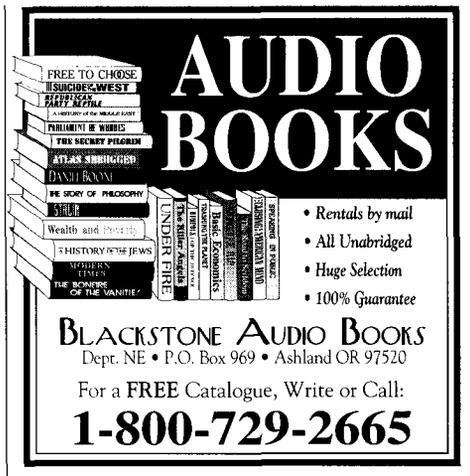
Garis distinguishes minutely and specifically among the qualities of dancers' performances and among the bodily styles of different dancers, precisely perceiving and delighting in Balanchine's relation to each one's "dance identity"; but he seems to have no comprehensive perception of the effect created by clothing each time any of them appears—no sense of the immediate visible apparition, with its unique combination of layered meaning and feeling, only of the perpetual process by which each identity is confirmed. He does not say nothing about costume; but nobody could miss the effects that he singles out. I was hoping for an exact elucidation of those sartorial choices that made the Balanchine ballets and their performers look exactly that way, and created those radically reconceived stage figures. The photo on page 229 shows Jacques d'Amboise in *Who Cares?*, but Garis hasn't mentioned the necktie around his waist in imitation of Astaire, who always wore ties for belts when he practiced. By contrast, he compares the décor and the costumes for *La Valse* contemptuously to "a Bonwit Teller window," and says that the ballet eventually "transcended this chic mode," showing that he has no more eye for window display than for painting, and hence not much for stage dress and setting.

I was raised on the ballet, and I was its born-again infant. Expertise came later. I saw the Fokine masterpieces and the early Balanchine masterpieces, along with Massine masterpieces and Petipa masterpieces, plus *Giselle*; I saw Danilova and Baronova, Toumanova and Riabouchinska, Lifar and Lichine, all beginning in 1934, when the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo had already been coming to Cleveland every year for some time, and my mother rightly decided that at 4 I was old enough to go. I was also old enough to accept it into my soul. Later there was the Ballet Theater with Markova and Dolin, Nora Kaye and Alicia Alonso, Eglevsky and Youskevitch, other ventures such as the Littlefield Ballet, Mia Slavenska and her ballet troupe, and finally the New York City Ballet. When I was in college in New York, I was also able to get standing room down front for the first visit of The Sadler's Wells Company to New York, another transforming experience, standing a few feet from Margot Fonteyn, watching her solar plexus radiate energy like the sun.

My mother had studied the ballet in Cleveland and so did I, beginning as a child, with an Imperial School survivor called Sergei Nadejdin. We stared in the mirror, mastering the line with eye, will and muscle, forcing the path toward perfection while Mrs. Hershberg thumped out Tchaikovsky, suffering the occasional small thwack of the master's slim baton. At the end of each class we practiced our *révérence*, for serene graciousness, and *port de bras*. In fact we were too fat, it would never really work. But how the soul and body sang with the effort! We studied the souvenir programs, full of pictures, and soon I was off to the library to immerse myself in the history of ballet, and brood further over all the ballets and dancers I would never see, the prints of Taglioni and Elssler, the photos of Kschessinska and Preobrajenska, Nijinsky and Bolm, Lopokova, Pavlova and Karsavina, whose memoir, *Theatre Street*, I read many times, along with Nijinsky's excruciating book about himself.

Central to me for these experiences was the figural vision, the dancer's body performing its exalted movements in its characteristic shoes, clothes and headgear, so erotic, so exact, so magical in its transcendent artifice—so like the characters in the great paintings I was busy staring at in books. Ballet costume was part of each dancer's dance and each dancer's soul; all three made the vision together, and the pictures from the past confirmed and augmented the beauty of present visions. You could see the source of the new in the old. The immense difference between the tutu that fell to the ankles, the tutu that flounced to the knee from a low hip-line, and the tutu that burst from the dancer's loins in a small, stiff spray were all crucial to the personal drama embodied in each dancer at the moment of appearance, not just to the role.

On stage each shape and flavor of skirt had its own relation to each toe-shod foot, to the ensemble of head and arms, to the tight focus of the torso; and each sat on each dancer differently, even as she simply crossed the stage in a preparatory walk. Disciplined hair, always hiding the artless ears, gave prominence to the dancer's rapt face, to the arch of the individual neck, to the precision of its turn. A crown or garland might sit regally high, or tenderly frame the face. And the men! The endless



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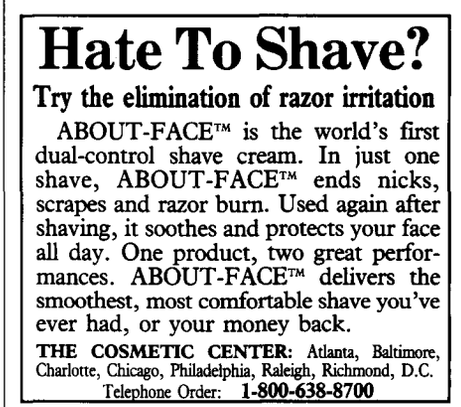
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leaping legs that went all the way up to the waist, offering glorious fore-and-aft landscapes sculpted in brilliant color or dazzling white, below noble torsos glittering with fervor or villainy, each different set of sleeves forming its own composition with the rippling legs and stately head. Suddenly *Schéhérézade* had everyone in oriental trousers even in toe-shoes, and even the men; and suddenly each captive princess in *Firebird* had a dozen long, swinging black braids—all potent evidence of earlier reforms now strengthening a comprehensive visual language.

Along came Balanchine's dancers wearing what everyone, including Garis, persists in calling "practice clothes." But a glance at Degas's works and other pictures, or into Karsavina's memoirs, shows that ballet practice was undertaken in tutus for generations, and custom has lately run to leg-warmers and a whole range of individual gear not prescribed by any common rule. The characters that burst brilliantly onto the Balanchine stage were *costumed*, in those black or white tights, black or white bodysuits, tunics, socks and t-shirts. The ensemble might suggest gymnastics, the carrying out of ritual exercise, and indeed does suggest not only ballet practice but modern-dance practice, just as the *Schéhérézade* costumes suggest the harem; but it also suggests the black-and-white formal garments of the symphony orchestra, as if these bodily instruments were now dressed to match them, to create a new sympathetic visual resonance with the musicians' own full-dress echo of Neoclassical simplicity. Both are clothes for performance.

It was soon clear that the range for this new costume theme is immense, like that for tailored suits: What were the decisions about when the black leotards should have tight leather belts, or each white tunic a little skirt? Why must the men with black legs always have white feet, and black-legged women never? In the abstract dances, the sweep of female leg remains unbroken to the toe's end, but all men are chopped off at the ankles, as never in classical dance. How was this arrived at? For the emotional ballets, how was it decided when to release the dancer's hair and ears, male and female,to produce yet another tonal variant in the vision and the motion? Why white legs here and black there? Why stiff skirts here and limp skirts there?

Garis has the answers to this sort of question only when the dancer, the music or the choreography is the subject. Still, the clothes affect him, even if he's not paying attention. He reacts strongly but obscurely to the difference between what he calls "ugly leotards" and "elegant white costumes." Garis gives the impression that all the variously austere and dramatic clothes for Balanchine's ballets were simply conjured by Balanchine himself, or even by the dancers themselves, and that hard-working designers and craftsmen, naturally dull-witted and ham-fisted, were responsible only for costumes that needed to be stripped down, changed or discarded. But dance costume is a refined theater art, and though all visual effects were subject to Balanchine's authority, dress was not his métier.

Whom did he engage to produce all these subtle variants? I do know one, from of old; and I was shocked to find no mention of the great Karinska in this book, another old Russian survivor who—unlike Chagall, Picasso, Dali and other painters who presumed to design ballet costumes with no knowledge whatsoever of cloth, cut and seam, let alone dance—was an exquisite craftswoman and interpreter as well a designer herself, with the highest standards of skill and materials, and unfailing balletic taste, both in the traditional and the modern vein. A lot of her work is still on the Balanchine stage. By the look of it, she understood him.

The history of ballet that informed Balanchine's own choreographic instincts was lacking to Garis when he began following Balanchine. He had to fill in the history later, but only in the light of Balanchine's new dispensation. Consequently, with some notable exceptions, the more spectacular and representational aspects of Balanchine's work often seem to Garis like efforts to please others more than himself, and to be less basically characteristic, even if exhilarating. Garis will allow Petipa's influence on the abstract sequences of dances Balanchine developed, but not Fokine's influence on *Serenade* and others. Fokine doesn't interest Garis, nor Massine, nor Nijinsky, and certainly not Isadora Duncan. He looks at the old-fashioned aspect of Balanchine with appreciative condescension, in something of the same spirit with which he views the English maintenance of the Romantic and Classic ballet traditions.

But I remember finding the English ballet a magnificent undertaking, in which many old works—*Silvia, La Bayadère, Cendrillon, Giselle* and indeed *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*—were offered with as pure a belief as they must originally have been, with none of the ignorance, laziness and failure of conviction that has led to carelessness and sketchiness or campiness among some latter-day companies that have attempted them, nor any decay of the best standards for visual spectacle. They made a legitimate reference to the courtly tradition behind the whole enterprise of ballet, preserving a continuity with ancient non-professional effects. Nothing was ever too fast, too crisp, or too obviously difficult; it was always perfect and simple, never sloppy or hasty, poignantly beautiful and suggestive.

Garis views all this rather disdainfully as exhibiting the limitations of "good taste"; and yet good taste is certainly what Balanchine himself never failed to have. Garis just likes it better when it's modern, and doesn't see its recurrent value as a universal clarifier of artistic aims. What does interest Garis is the evidence of Balanchine's experiences in Hollywood, and his serious artistic affinity with American popular culture, which Garis wishes to contrast with Robbins's allegedly shallow and crowd-pleasing musical-comedy spirit. All this suggests to me that Garis's own relation to popular culture is uneven and uneasy, that he envies both Balanchine's and Robbins's different kinds of ease with it.

Garis has only recently come to view the modern dance with any favor, more or less as a side effect of his devotion to Balanchine. He experienced no conversion, as some of us did, upon encountering Martha Graham. (Her sense of music was very spotty, and you could often imagine the dances better accompanied by nothing but a drum.) Garis evidently cannot love or even clearly see any dance that doesn't have a score he loves, and he admits it, not without pride. So he's not able to place Balanchine inside the modern-dance context either, and allow for any current lateral influences, along with possible past vertical ones he hasn't personally experienced and digested. Garis believes in the immediacy of dance criticism, which is based on the immediacy of dance itself. He thinks that getting all the allusions is fun but not essential for getting the point. But some points are made through references and echoes. He says confidently, about a ballet he can't exactly pin down the style of, " . . . in fact, not having a term for this style is the best way to experience it." Maybe.

Garis often hints that the great Balanchine works may not survive. With the death of the master, the ballets have lost their own living power, even their power to engage viewers as they once did. This is owed to the nature of the medium. We know how a painter or poet can make something held to a standard of

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A message from Negative Population Growth, Inc.

The Jordan Commission's Proposals on Immigration

In June, Barbara Jordan and her Commission on Immigration Reform recommended that the U.S. reduce legal immigration by nearly one third. For that proposal we congratulate and commend them, recognizing the courage it required. The Commission, to its great credit, has clearly asserted that substantially lower immigration is in the national interest. **But, in our view, the proposed reduction falls far short of what is needed.**

The Central Issue

Sadly, no environmental rationale was offered by the Commission for its proposed reduction. We believe it is critically important for the Commission to justify its proposal by recognizing the impact of immigration on U.S. population growth, and by affirming the urgent need to substantially reduce that impact in order to stabilize U.S. population at a sustainable level.

Beyond any question, immigration's impact on U.S. population growth (and, therefore, on our environment and resources) is the central issue. Immigration must not be viewed in isolation, but as an integral part of a national population policy designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, the mindless and disastrous growth of our population. Our goal must be to stabilize our population, as soon as possible, at a sustainable level. That would require a population far smaller than today's.

More Immigrants Mean a Larger Population

Immigrants, and their descendants, are the driving force behind the growth that could well bring our population to half a billion in the next century. **The effects of immigration on our population growth, not secondary issues such as jobs or welfare costs, should determine how many immigrants our nation admits.**

Greater Reductions in Immigration Are Needed

What would happen to U.S. population growth if the Commission's proposal to allow 550,000 core legal immigrants a year became law? Our projections show that with 550,000 net immigration, and with current fertility of 2.0 persisting, our population would grow to 354 million by 2050, and to 386 million by the end of the next century. Such growth would surely cripple our environment and degrade the quality of our lives.

These numbers could be even higher, since our assumptions are conservative. First, we assume optimistically that the number of U.S. residents leaving (emigrating) each year offsets the number of illegal settlers. But unless controls become far more stringent, the number of illegal settlers will continue to exceed emigration, adding to future population growth.

Second, the Commission was vague with regard to the limits on immediate relatives. Left unclear is whether immediate relatives of citizens, now 250,000 a year and growing, will continue to enter outside of quota, without limit. If so, core immigration of 550,000 a year, plus immediate relatives, could equal or exceed the present level of 800,000 a year. Moreover, the recommended 50,000 yearly limit on refugees could be raised at will.

We Must Reduce Both Immigration and Fertility

For an early end to U.S. population growth, NPG recommends an end to all illegal immigration, and a comprehensive, airtight ceiling of 100,000 a year on all legal immigration, including relatives, refugees, asylees, and skilled workers. At that reduced level, and with fertility continuing at 2.0, our population would reach 321 million in 2050, and would still be a high 314 million by the end of the next century. **Such growth, although far less than the growth that would result from the Commission's proposal, would still be unacceptable. What we urgently need is not a larger U.S. population, but a far smaller one.**

Clearly, a negative rate of population growth demands that we reduce substantially our fertility as well as immigration. NPG has long recommended non-coercive incentives to encourage parents to have no more than two children. If American women accepted a two-child limit, total fertility would drop to around 1.5 (the level we recommend) since many women choose to have only one child, or none.

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. and world population growth, write today for our **FREE BROCHURE.** NPG is a national nonprofit organization founded in 1972. **We are the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and recommends specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

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perfection which will survive him and his culture, even taking with it into the future the beloved who was the excuse, as Shakespeare often said and Rembrandt showed; but Balanchine worked with live human material inside an institution, itself a complex organism made of humanly fallible members and managers. So long as he had undisputed artistic authority over every aspect of his work, the ballets developed and changed as Balanchine re-envisioned them, or were discarded altogether, for a time or forever, if the right combination of dancers was wanting. Individuals who couldn't stand the tyranny of his artistic will had to leave. Since his death, however, it is the institution that survives. The ballets must simply stand by and patiently await their fate.

Under Peter Martins's direction, Garis writes, the spirit of democracy is invading the repertory, sowing artistic death. Indifferent or ill-suited dancers are cast in roles to the detriment of the pieces, to serve an ideal of institutional fairness. Two casts may dance a ballet alternatively, simply to give more performers a chance, instead of one perfect cast dancing the piece until another is developed to be perfect in another way, or more so. While Balanchine was using his beloved Suzanne Farrell in ballet after ballet, other dancers felt neglected and ground their teeth; but Garis follows Balanchine in these decisions, too, with sympathetic fidelity to the choreographer's artistic compulsion, out of which his love was made.

But now Balanchine is dead, and the whole world of art has undergone much travail. The great modern ideal of art for its own sake, for the divine uselessness which invites and enjoins artists to develop their bold strokes and subversive explorations and minute refinements only on art's own terms are once more subject to crude question. Not just Balanchine but Diaghilev, not just them but Baudelaire, not just him but Delacroix and a procession of others would turn in their graves at the pretty pass to which things have come. These days art seems largely believed to be a sort of spontaneously generated personal gesture on the part of an ordinary citizen, a gesture with a natural intrinsic value equal to that of those made by all other citizens, protected under the laws of political equality and attacked under the same laws, as if its imaginative projections were subject to rules only of civil behavior.

Garis has produced a manifesto and an elegy. The elegy is for the Balanchine Enterprise, as he calls it, the serious modern art offered, for a time, at the New York City Ballet in the process of its creation by a twentieth-century genius. The fruits of Garis's critical attention to the Enterprise, set forth in this book in loving detail, are his funerary offering. The Enterprise cannot survive as Balanchine made it, and the ballets live only in their modifications by future dancers and choreographers—sometimes as undead, in zombie-like versions. Of course they share this fate with every other modern corpus of dance works, along with *Giselle* and *La Sylphide* and *La Fille mal gardée*, now made so long ago that nobody is alive to mourn the originals. Film and videotape have lately arrived to help out the situation, but Garis is only cautiously grateful for these, possibly because of their limiting character: one time, one cast, with no possibility of a future dynamic for this closed-off and artificially viewed performance.

I imagine that for anybody who has been to the ballet and found it lovely but doesn't remember it very well, this book is not going to be very useful; Garis is writing first of all for present and future devotees. But his larger manifesto is really about the continuing importance of knowing exactly what makes an art great, just how its examples embody the artist's purpose, and what they can mean to you and me. Such knowledge, in the case of Balanchine, meant going to the ballet over and over again; but in considering the examples of any art, the good work of true understanding always has to be repetitive and ruminative and slow. And describing this effort over the span of a career is similarly repetitive and ruminative. The conscientious reader needs a good set of living memories so as to follow Garis the critic without flagging, or even without exploding. He is frequently tedious about himself and gives us more than we want for the purpose, and with more weight. Since we're captives on his train, we often resent it. But we forgive him. His message is rare in our day, and any day needs to hear it.

ANNE HOLLANDER is the author of *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (Knopf).

Heretic, Yes

BY DENNIS WRONG

Letters of Sidney Hook: Democracy, Communism, and the Cold War edited by Edward S. Shapiro

(M.E. Sharpe, 416 pp., $65)

Sidney Hook was the first academic intellectual to win wide recognition as a sympathetic interpreter of Marxism and a supporter, though never a member, of the American Communist Party. He also became, in the early 1930s, even before the beginning of the Moscow trials, just about the first to end his support and to become an outspoken critic of Soviet Communism for betraying what he had originally seen as its democratic and egalitarian promise. In this volume of Hook's letters, only the opening letter, the single one dated before 1930, reflects his youthful enthusiasm for Communism. Written to his parents, in the summer of 1929, from Moscow, where he was doing research on a Guggenheim fellowship at the Marx-Engels Institute, he declared that he "has seen no Potemkin villages" and that "every brick, every road, every machine is a symbol of the new spirit." Several letters on Marxism of a strictly theoretical nature are the only others antedating Hook's emergence in 1934 as the fierce antagonist of Communism he remained for the rest of his long life, which ended in 1989 just before the disintegration of the Soviet bloc.

Hook's anti-Communism was of longer duration, more unchanging, more central to his worldview and more influential in shaping the language and rhetoric of later anti-Communists, than that of any other political intellectual. As Arthur Schlesinger Jr. observed in his review in these pages of *Out of Step*, Hook's memoir of 1987, Hook "[let] anti-communism consume his life to the point that, like Aaron's rod, it swallowed up nearly everything else." This selection of Hook's letters certainly reinforces such a view, if only because it is confined to letters on "Democracy, Communism, and the Cold War." A few letters to priests and clergymen take

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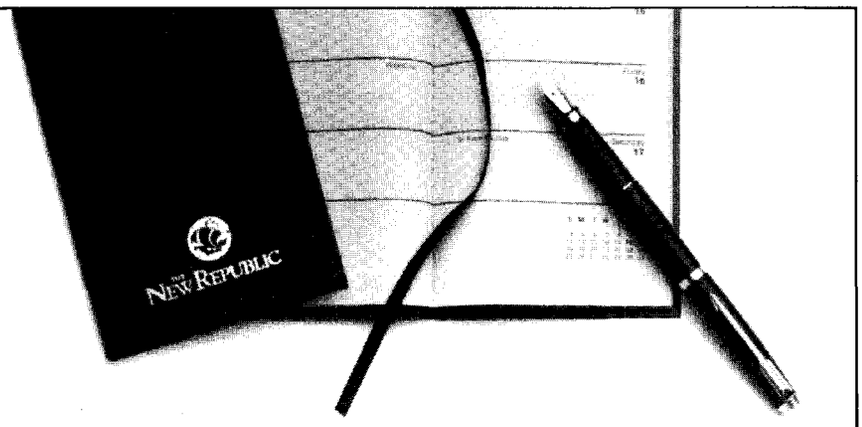
issue with their theologically grounded opinions on morality or democracy, and a few are primarily on philosophical questions related to Marxism, but the vast majority are polemics addressed to liberals and left-wingers against views that Hook saw as either pro-Communist or insufficiently or unintelligently anti-Communist.

Hook was, indeed, as Edward Shils said, "probably the greatest polemicist of this century," and that is the source of the strengths and the limitations of his outlook. The letters are arranged in chronological sections from the 1930s through the 1980s, with historical introductions to each section by the editor, Edward S. Shapiro. Hook's early anti-Stalinism was altogether courageous, principled and intelligent. In the early '30s it was necessary to assail vigorously local Communists and their supporters who saw the Soviet Union as a desirable model for American society to be realized by revolutionary means. Hook's major targets inevitably shifted over time, as the Soviet Union became, after 1935, mainly an issue of foreign policy. During the Popular Front era and the war, Hook centered his criticism on the belief that Russia was an ally possessing deep democratic affinities with the United States. After the onset of the cold war, he directed his fire mainly against those he called "ritualistic liberals" and "anti-anti-Communists": neutralists, defenders of the rights of domestic Communists, critics of American foreign policy for its alleged imperialism and support for right-wing dictators, and, somewhat later, New Leftists and historical revisionists who blamed the United States for the cold war.

Hook justified his preoccupation with the civil liberties of native Communists on the grounds of their concealed primary loyalty to the nation's enemies during the Korean war and the cold war. The slogan "heresy, yes, conspiracy, no"—the title of his 1953 book—sums up his argument. The present volume includes too many letters on the subject, adding to its longueurs and hardly enhancing Hook's reputation. Hook's advocacy of restrictions on the liberties of Communists led to his being widely perceived as an ally of conservatives and right-wing Republicans. In a number of letters, however, he indignantly—and accurately—refutes accusations that he was pro-McCarthy, in favor of outlawing the Communist Party, jailing all Communists or firing all teachers sympathetic to Communism. "I regard the issue as one of *professional*, not political ethics," he insists repeatedly, in an effort to dissociate himself from the furor over McCarthyism



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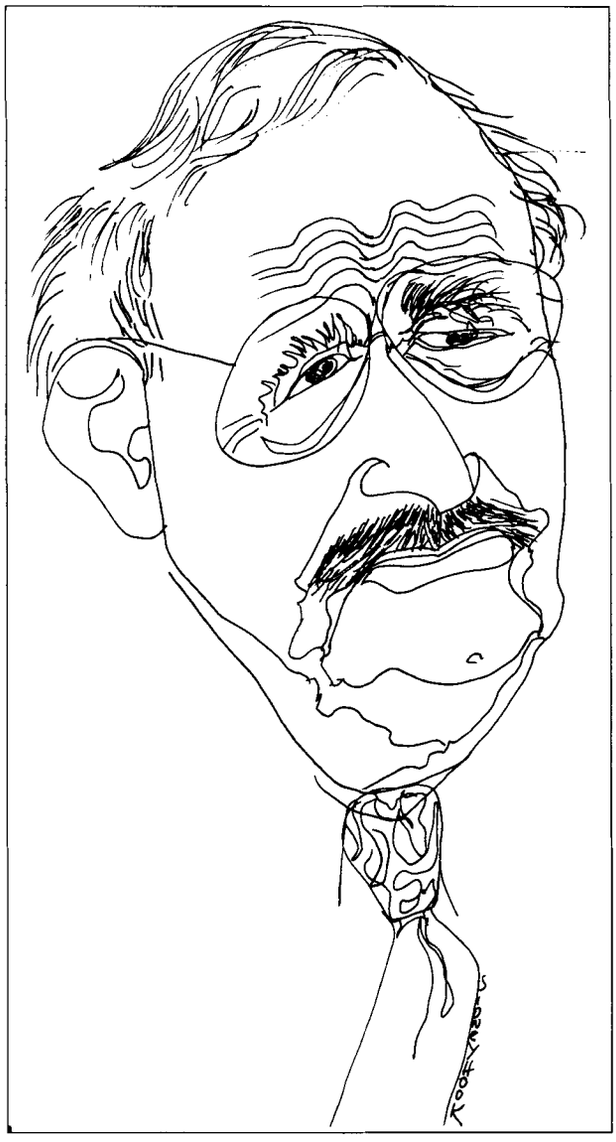
that dominated politics in the early '50s. Several letters reveal that a number of Hook's own colleagues in the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, which he had founded and controlled, disagreed with him on the rights of Communists and especially on the specific question of the treatment of teachers who were Communists or fellow-travelers or who had pleaded the Fifth Amendment before courts or legislative committees.

Hook can be faulted not only for his abstract and formulaic approach to the subject, but for involving himself so deeply in what turned out to be ephemeral issues. Many of the laws and the practices penalizing Communists that he sought to justify were struck down by the courts a few years later. It would have made little difference if the few suspect teachers in American universities had simply been ignored at a time when support for Communism was steadily declining. To be sure, Senator McCarthy and his minions did not ignore them, and Hook's proposal that the universities undertake their own investigations was intended to fend off the unenlightened and publicity-seeking attention of politicians; but he was much too disposed to find excuses for any anti-Communist measures that were not quite so obviously futile or cynically self-promoting as academic loyalty oaths and the investigative excesses of McCarthy.

Hook's steadfast and virtually unqualified commitment to the cold war eventually drew him into the company of conservatives and neoconservatives associated with the Nixon and Reagan administrations. Many of his positions on American foreign policy during the cold war were sensible, but they were hardly "out of step" with most Americans or their government. In the late 1940s and the 1950s Hook too frequently resorted to the standard cold war rhetoric of the time: "the free world," "the Soviet drive for world conquest" and even "the international Communist conspiracy." (Ronald Reagan's much-criticized "evil empire" was certainly an improvement over the latter term.) More than twenty years later, in the 1980s, Hook was still insisting that the Soviet Union was a greater threat than ever, that it was clearly winning the cold war, that it still cherished far-reaching expansionist ambitions. He does not appear to have noticed that the greater armed strength of the Soviet Union coincided with an unmistakable decline in the international appeal of communism.

There was pathos and intellectual heroism in the original fervor of the anti-Stalinist Left, which was an isolated minority animated by a concern for truth and morality that hardly anyone else cared to hear in that time and place. As Lionel Abel once sardonically remarked, the only parts of Russia where Trotsky got an even break with Stalin were certain neighborhoods in New York City. Yet to have been so right so early about what became a genuinely "world-historical" issue also had distorting effects. Through the '80s Hook, as if nothing at all had changed, insisted that his support for more forceful cold war policies was based on his enduring understanding of "the Bolshevik mind." I recall hearing the same claim from other elders of Hook's generation who had for a short time been Communists or fellow-travelers in the '30s before turning against Stalinism. All that one can say is that none of them seems to have had any insight whatever into the minds of Gorbachev, Shevardnadze or Yeltsin.



DRAWING OF SIDNEY HOOK BY HANNAH BERMAN

Was there really a "Bolshevik mind" that perpetuated itself unchanged through several generations? As late as 1984 Hook queried a correspondent as to whether a liberal journalist who had criticized him—Paul Berman, a contributor to these pages—"is CP or Trotskyist." And when I once wrote critically about another old anti-Stalinist for contending that, while McCarthy was a scoundrel, he had at least alerted the American people to the Communist threat, the man in question wrote me insisting that the government's jailing of Earl Browder for passport fraud was hardly evidence of sufficient concern. To speak of a fixation on the 1930s does not seem much of an exaggeration in such cases.

In the early post-war years it took intellectual courage and intellectual power to grasp and to articulate fully the nature of the Soviet threat. Comparisons between Stalinism and Hitlerism were entirely relevant; and it was the wish to avoid the appeasement and the unpreparedness of the '30s policies toward Germany that motivated the policymakers in Washington. Yet Hook continued to make much of analogies with the Nazis nearly forty years later. Writing to an historian who was born after 1945 about the impact of McCarthyism on the universities, Hook asks her, "If these victims had been members of a Nazi Party and as fervent supporters of Hitler and his practices as they were of Stalin and Stalin's practices, would you still feel the same compassion for them?" It is important to remember that the thousand-year Reich lasted only twelve years, for half of which time it was involved in the most terrible war in history. The cold war with the Soviet Union, by contrast, endured for over forty years. The contrasting time-scales unavoidably made a difference. The apocalyptic sense of crisis in the early cold war years was understandable and even appropriate, but it was not capable of being sustained indefinitely in the absence of a shooting

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war. The interludes of détente between the powers also helped to ease the apocalyptic feeling. And most important, perhaps, the Soviet Union was not (to use one of the left's favorite terms) reified.

It was precisely the reduced probability of a shooting war, especially after the Cuban missile crisis and the first arms control treaties, that provided the occasion for the New Left to make an ideological end-run around the stasis of the cold war by reviving a native American radicalism unburdened by the Communist incubus. Hook and other old anti-Stalinists too readily assimilated the radicals of the '60s to their old Communist and fellow-traveling enemies and dusted off their familiar polemical rhetoric for use against them. But the New Left was not simply a latter-day reincarnation of the Stalinists. The old anti-Stalinists had regarded the Communists as a corrupting presence on the left, as a source of a repellent self-righteousness, dogmatism and mendacity that was the consequence of the communists' concealment of their unshakable allegiance to the Soviet Union. Yet most of these traits were also displayed by the New Leftists who were not covertly controlled or manipulated by a party serving the interests of a foreign power. Both the New Left and the earlier fellow-travelers may have been manifesting only a radical disposition with a typically American moralistic flavor, rather than exemplifying a particular conspiratorial or totalitarian ethos.

Much of the language of current political debate has been deformed by these echoes from the past. Contemporary conservatives are prone to brand as "anti-American" any critics of American society identified with the left or liberalism. They wield the epithet "Stalinist" against their opponents almost as promiscuously as the Stalinists called their opponents "fascist." The charge that a particular proposal reflects a "political agenda" often carries the unspoken suggestion that the agenda is "hidden" or "secret," as was frequently the case in the past when the Communists favored a given policy. Yet, as Hook rightly noted, the radicals of the '60s were only too eager to proclaim their allegiances from the rooftops, even when their political line included support for Communist countries, in striking contrast to the earlier native Communists and their allies who engaged in secret infiltration and the creation of front groups well before the Soviet Union and the United States confronted each other in the cold war.

Sidney Hook died just a few months too soon to witness the collapse of Communism, and this fact fills one with sadness. Of all people, he deserved to enjoy the end. And for another reason, too. Hook habitually described himself as "an unreconstructed social democrat." Anti-Communism as a principled and informed point of view, after all, had its origins on the left, from the Mensheviks, Lovestoneites, Trotskyists and democratic socialists to the cold war liberals. Reporting that "he [Hook] still proclaimed himself a democratic socialist and the supporter of a redistribution of wealth," Edward Shapiro remarks that "these social democratic inclinations, however, increasingly appeared to be vestigial and an insignificant element in his political persona." People had been saying that for a long time; but for all the single-mindedness of his anti-Communism, I believe that Hook's left-reformist commitments meant something to him that might have become more salient with the end of the cold war.

The year before Hook died, I had a letter from him in which he wrote that "despite recent revelations about bureaucratic ineptitude, I still believe in socialized medicine." Knowing that I am a Canadian, he asked me for information about the Canadian system of national health insurance, which, after consulting colleagues who were medical sociologists, I was able to supply him. I am confident that he would not have joined the neoconservatives in their surrender to old-time Republican denigration and gutting of the welfare state. (The "neo," remember, was supposed to indicate that they accepted the New Deal and its long-established reforms.) Nor do I believe that Hook would have freely used the label "anti-American" even against his critics on the left, because he remembered too well its use against him in the superheated patriotic atmosphere of 1914-1918 when, as a schoolboy, he was already a precocious socialist and a political debater. In this respect, Hook really would have remained out of step.

DENNIS WRONG is the author most recently of *The Problem of Order: What Unites and Divides Society* (Harvard University Press).

The Goddess That Failed

BY EVGENIA PERETZ

Hunters and Gatherers by Francine Prose

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 247 pp., $20)

There was a time, not too long ago, when the best an unmarried woman could hope for was a respectable old maidenhood, a life of fine embroidery, charity work and the satisfaction of serving as confidante and mentor to younger women worrying about their own chances. Contentment meant going through life, like poor Catherine Sloper in *Washington Square*, "with an even and noiseless step."

No more. These days, as Francine Prose reveals in her satirical new novel, the alternative to a life with men is never even, never noiseless. It is, in fact, nothing short of a blast. The ten middle-class Manhattan women whom Prose has created as the protagonists of her tenth novel write books, run businesses, work in science labs. They enjoy a testosterone-free spiritual life, and so they get to eat roadkill, listen to cacti speak to one another and bang on any kind of drum they want.

Prose's novel tells the story of one very literal-minded New Yorker on the brink of an inner crisis, who becomes involved with one very wobbly coterie of goddess-worshipers. Theirs is a religion based on honoring "the original female deity whom matriarchal cultures have revered since the Stone Age," and their modus operandi is, "if it doesn't work, bag it. There's no rule book, no expectations, and we're writing our own sacred text every minute of our lives."

Of course, the New Age goddess worshipers of Prose's novel are easy targets. They are a parody of themselves; and writing 247 pages of characters who interchangeably use the terms "Yo!" and "Blessed be" may seem like kicking at a door that's already down. But Prose is not just teasing weirdos here. Her plan is not that thin. She understands that comedy—or good comedy—is not

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In the context of the ongoing negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, it is often asserted that the Israeli towns and villages (usually and with some derogation referred to as "settlements") in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") are a hindrance to peace. That has been and is being repeated so often that many have come to accept it as truth.

What are the facts?

A thumbnail history. In order to gain perspective, some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times—without interruption. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank) *and* what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights. In 1922, contrary to the Mandate of the League of Nations, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan River and gave it to the Hashemites as reward for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan was left for Jewish settlement.

The "West Bank" occupied by Jordan. In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews in the territories west of the Jordan River, the British had enough and relinquished the Mandate. The United Nations proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be internationalized. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allotted to them by the United Nations, the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated the six Arab armies. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan promptly renamed itself Jordan.

Israel recaptures the "West Bank" in the Six-Day War. Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of whether they were Israelis, Americans or citizens of any other country, were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Egyptian president Abdel Nasser joined by the same array of Arab armies that had unsuccessfully tried to destroy Israel at its birth in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. The Israelis pre-empted and utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the Six-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed not only the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), but also the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and had occupied Egypt's vast Sinai Peninsula.

"How can 150,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be an "obstacle to peace"? Over one million Arabs live in Israel...nobody considers *them* an obstacle to peace."

It is clear from this abbreviated history that Israel's claim to the "West Bank" is at least as strong as that of the Arabs. It's only by dint of constant repetition that the world has come to think of these territories as "occupied Arab land". About 150,000 Jews now live in these territories. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews cannot live? How can 150,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be "an obstacle to peace"? Over one million Arabs live in Israel. They are citizens, they have every civil right, and of course have nothing to fear from their Jewish fellow citizens. Certainly, nobody considers *them* an obstacle to peace.

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only funny; it can also reveal affecting and uncomfortable truths about the world.

The central figure of Prose's tale is Martha, "a pale, twig-like" woman of 30 whose dreary job as a fact-checker at the fashion magazine *Mode!* she finds sadly suited to her "starchy" personality. She has recently been dumped by Dennis, actor by night, handyman by day, who had spent the previous winter working magic on her ego by suggesting "she spend more time this summer at the beach, acquiring some muscle tone and working on her body." And the men she has met since have hardly been an improvement. They've been "friendly, likable fellows" and some, as Martha tells us, have "mastered the clever trick of chatting intimately even as they looked past you like restless party guests scanning the room for someone more attractive."

Martha, in short, is feeling about as sexy as mayonnaise, and as refrigerated. So when, while taking a lonely walk down the beach in Fire Island, she stumbles upon a group of women donning paisley and angel wings, nuzzling, cuddling, exchanging embraces, she becomes curious. She is promptly introduced to the picturesque scene by Randi—goddess name: Hegwitha—who explains that "tonight is a Druid Holy night," and that "all over the world women are honoring the harvest and Persephone's return from Hades to join her mother." The fact-checker in her tells Martha that the spectacle is silly. But now, as she stands alone, taking stock of her own dwindling assets, honoring Persephone's return from Hades doesn't sound so bad.

True to her dull, somewhat timid form, Martha continues to stand on the sidelines watching. Until, that is, the group's charismatic leader, Isis Moonwagon, nearly drowns while performing a complicated water ritual. Senior Lifesaving comes back to Martha in a flash; and immediately she's in the freezing water, hauling Isis's body safely back to shore. Subsequently we learn that Isis's near-drowning is nothing unusual. "I can't count the times she's almost drowned or set herself on fire," one goddess worshiper admires. Still, Martha's heroism lands her a temporary position as Isis's favorite, and she is invited to join the group back at Isis's sacred protected space that the goddess worshipers call their "ovulary." Which, it turns out, is known in the secular world as a mansion. Partially by default, partially by a real desire to be a part of something, Martha accepts.

Prose is remarkably perceptive about

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the pretensions and the anomalies of modern people, and with Isis Moonwagon she has the time of her life. Isis is an ex-academic, and her first book, she tells Martha, was titled *Freud, Jesus and Matriarchy* and brought her "gobs of attention" for its "titillating mix of religion, gender, and sex" and catapulted her to fame. But this, of course, was all in the past, in her former life, before she saw the "woman in white, flying across the sky in a chariot pulled by winged white horses." After that, what woman wouldn't start channeling her energy toward becoming a "really centered priestess-shaman healer"? Isis is sort of a cross between the ludicrous Camille Paglia and the ludicrous Marianne Williamson. (Prose seems to have found at least some of her inspiration for the character of Isis Moonwagon in Iris Love, the archaeologist famous for having discovered the Temple of Aphrodite Euploia in Knidos, Turkey, who is now famous for being a cosmic socialite and, therefore, famous for being famous.) That she should still have killer bone structure, know everybody and possess significant real estate holdings is just luck. Isis Moonwagon explains her sex life: "Mental sex with a deity is so much better than sex with mortals—healthier, always available, less messy in every way." And about Isis's followers, too, Prose is no less dead-on in her portrayals. There's Titania, the CEO of Love's Body, a company that specializes in ecologically sound bubble-bath; Freya Wünderlich, an arrogant, crappy painter who's constantly hassling her smart-mouthed daughter, Sonoma, for being chubby; the touchy-feely therapist Bernie; Joy, whose introduction "Gangway—one-legged dykes from hell!" sums her up rather nicely; and Diana, the grim anorexic who needs to start eating so she can stop talking.

Prose follows Martha and her new companions from New York to The Four Feathers Institute in Arizona, where they've planned a retreat with a medicine woman, hilariously chipping away at their religion. Their bleating chant of "ma-ma-ma" is used to "center" the group's "energy" and to loosen up rush-hour Manhattan traffic. The intense moral questions that the group must confront—whether or not to kill a few hours at the zoo—are settled by voting as they zip along the highway. And at the crisis point in the novel, when Sonoma disappears one night, the women's prayers go out not to the goddess, but to a deity named Jesus Christ. (A man!)

As for that mushy Druid-love, Prose blows it to pieces. Diana seduces Hegwitha with her grim personality, then dumps her the next day with more nonchalance than a rock star. Freya's relentless torturing of Sonoma is straight out of Oprah. And the subtlety of their digs at each other's careers might impress a bunch of Chapin alumnae at a high-school reunion. But it is Isis Moonwagon who gets the last word on the article of faith that is the foundation of their religion: keep thin and stay gorgeous.

There is something cartoonish about these hunters and gatherers. Some of Prose's satirized conversations get a little oppressive in their idiocy. Still, Prose gives her figures just enough quirky opinions, just enough vividly imagined lines, that somehow, almost behind our backs, they grow to be endearing. As in Prose's previous novel, *Primitive People*, which satirized a dysfunctional suburban family from Hudson Landing, New York, these comic targets emerge as genuine people with significant needs. That their alternative life is a joke is, in the end, no laughing matter.

Reality has a way of defeating spiritual nonsense, of bringing these women back to their senses. Hegwitha's cancer is back, but during Talking Stick—the New Age version of Truth or Dare—she doesn't trust them enough to tell them. Rita has seen her mother beaten by her father, but her much-admired gift for finding wisdom in storytelling produces only a slew of pathetic shaggy-dog folk tales. And she hasn't even fooled herself. Her friends may be "Brother Scorpion," and "Sister Black Widow Spider," but her lover is Scotty Deer-Skin, who likes to slap her on the ass and tell fat jokes about her. These Manhattan New Agers keep running into their own incompetence about human contact. They need something desperately, but the goddess isn't it.

But the shadows do not overwhelm Prose's story. She set out to write a comedy, and so she wraps it up quite tidily with Martha regaining faith in normal human existence and getting married. But her restoration is not quite satisfying because she herself is never sufficiently interesting or sufficiently complicated to make you care too much about her fate. Unlike the protagonists in Prose's stories in *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Martha's epiphanies are neither odd enough nor poignant enough. She is really just a lens through which we view Prose's real subjects, the other lost souls whose spiritual adventures get them nowhere. Martha finds her way back, but the others, when last seen, are still bleating at the Four Feathers Institute.

EVGENIA PERETZ is a writer living in New York.

When Mother was Famous

Everyone said "Hepburn,"
but Mother was Judy Garland
without the chemical imbalance.
She stayed in Kansas, for one thing,
liking those towns whose streets unrolled
like newsreels she'd watched during the war,
when she would sit alone in the old State Theater
hoping to see the fiancé who'd been killed right off,
who might peer out from a bit of footage,
lips pursed, singling her out in the salty dark:
"Hi, Ginnie."

When she finally saw Frank two soldiers back
he didn't look up.
She ran straight home,
locking the door as if someone was after her,
turned, saw him again on the living room wall:
an oil-painted cousin who'd cracked through the ice
in the previous century.
The room's seasick heave came back each time
a dream flipped neatly into color,
and eventually she could do it to herself,
could pack lunches or fold laundry
then next thing be lying on the kitchen floor
pregnant again.

Not everyone's made for happiness, of course,
or small-town life.
Her skittish daughters heard the Dead Fiancé story
long after Judy Garland
climbed into their black and white TV
and for a few brief seasons of Sunday nights
Mother would paint her lips,
sing along, and sway.

TERRI WITEK

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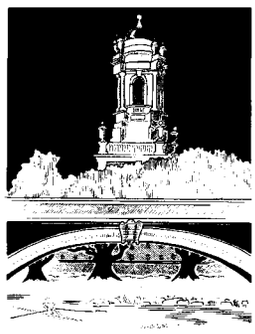
CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Vichyssoise

"WITHOUT MAPS OF THEIR OWN, without the requisite detailed knowledge of the facts or figures possessed by the Israelis. . . . " How piteously the Palestinian negotiators have been conducting their talks with Shimon Peres! How piteously, at least according to Edward Said who, in the October 16 *Nation*, makes the PLO ruling stratum out to be not just gangsters but satraps of Israel besides. If these characterizations surprise anyone Said has only himself to blame. For years he'd been telling all those who'd listen—and many did—that Arafat and company were exemplary democrats, kind, noble, wise. Of course, those were the days when the distinctive signature of the Palestinian revolution was written in the blood of innocents, mostly Jewish, to be sure. Those were the days, too, when Said was Arafat's anointed emissary to the intellectuals. The famous professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia has now broken with the man for whom he used to do p.r., and he has broken with Arafat not over democracy or accountability or honor but over whether the Palestinians should at last accept the reality of Israel. The accusations Said makes against Arafat are just blinds. Given his outrage, for example, over the financial chicanery Said now attributes to the chairman you might think that, pre-handshake, the PLO had been run like the Fiduciary Trust Company on Federal Street in Boston. And the rough justice Arafat enforces, against which Said protests, is just what it was during the years the PLO ran southern Lebanon, except that then neither Said nor the journalists in the region were telling.

"ARAFAT AND HIS PALESTINIAN Authority have become a sort of Vichy government," writes Said. Anyone who knows anything about Vichy knows how preposterous the analogy is. The analogy is not used idly, however, but to evoke by association another analogy even Said won't quite make explicit, and that is the one between the Israelis and the Nazis. That's the analogy that allows him to think of himself as a resistant. But to what? To the accords of 1993 and 1995, surely. But, if you read his text closely, you'll find that he has not even accommodated himself to the idea of pre-1967 Israel, which is to say, pre-1949 Israel. There are, Said writes, 800,000 Palestinians within Israel's old borders. The PLO has forgotten them, "accepting the Israeli designation of Palestinians as only the encaged residents of the territories." This is a statement of irredentist intent: Said wants the Galilee on the table, and other places besides. That's what he may have meant when he wrote that the PLO was without maps and without requisite knowledge of facts and figures at the peace talks. Because if he meant something more prosaic and more literal, then you've got to wonder if the PLO is competent enough to be handed any territory to rule. Imagine some Zionist, even a dissident, writing in the '20s, let alone in 1947, that the Jewish Agency for Palestine came to parley "without maps of their own, without the requisite detailed knowledge of the facts or figures" possessed by the British and Arabs.



LIKE MANY OTHER thugs, Mr. Arafat was at the U.N. this week. He is one person who has reason to celebrate the U.N. It was the venue where his pistol-in-shoulder-holster speech made him a big star. He also spoke at Harvard—where the only remaining big star in the political firmament, Fidel Castro, first became a big star in the U.S. when some 30,000 cheered him at the football stadium in 1959. But, for the rest of the world, it was two appearances on the East River that put Castro's name in lights. Then there was still the illusion of communist power and particularly of successful communist insurgencies in the Americas. So Castro was seen as a major player. Now there is nothing to support his stature, and surely not the expectation that he is building a good society. Cuba is a wreck, not because of the U.S. boycott but because of the coercion of communist economics. That coercion doesn't produce goods for market but it can silence a people, and this Castro has done. His regime is on its last legs, surviving only because the dictator has been so thorough and unrelenting in his tyranny. Nonetheless, he is very much in demand socially this week in New York. Maybe it's because he is the last of a species. David Rockefeller ("and his family," *The Boston Globe* reported) was able to grab him first by giving a dinner party where Castro would meet American business leaders. Castro didn't come for the U.N.'s birthday fest. He came here to meet just such avaricious corporate types who are willing to prop up the precarious dictatorship so long as they can make a buck. If Castro succeeds in winning these folk over we will have another instance of rapacious capital at the service of the few remaining and extremely feeble communisms.

CASTRO IS NOT THE FIRST COMmunist tyrant for whom Rockefeller has had a soft spot. In 1964, after he met Nikita Khruschev, he became an enthusiast of U.S.-Soviet trade. Chase, the once all-powerful family bank now about to pass into oblivion, was the first U.S. bank to open a Moscow office, where its function was to prop up the regime by making loans to state enterprises—at below-market rates, no less. (It was precisely such behavior, in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, which first made Chase a basket case.) Chase was central to what has come to be recognized as the great grain robbery of 1972, in which Moscow bought American wheat at subsidized prices with low-interest credit, an unapproved form of foreign aid. In 1970, Rockefeller had Nicolae Ceauşescu to lunch, and Ceauşescu had a new ally in the (successful) campaign to give Romania Most Favored Nation status. In those days, at least, the titans of capital may have thought that they were buying into the cusp of history. Of course, that's not what they said. They justified their underwriting of these brutal states by claiming that foreign investment would make them more peaceful and more decent. What foreign investment actually did was to maintain their sway, encouraging the communist elites to believe, rightly, that human rights abuses did not especially offend the bankers with whom they were dealing. Cuba has been trying to attract American capital for years, and Castro has now enlisted Rockefeller in his effort. This is necessarily a political effort since the law does not now permit American capital to go to Cuba. Why should it? Cuba is one of the worst human rights offenders in the hemisphere. Anticipating this demurrer, Rockefeller, out of work and out of sync, pulls out his old lyrics: trade will make for peaceful change. Communist governments have always had their capitalist camp followers—Armand Hammer, Cyrus Eaton, Donald Kendall, David Rockefeller himself—as Joseph Finder's remarkable book, *Red Carpet*, revealed. But why now? "Nobody knows how to revere, blandish and exalt a Rockefeller," wrote George Gilder, "half so well as the Marxists." And, of these, Castro is really the only one left.

MARTIN PERETZ

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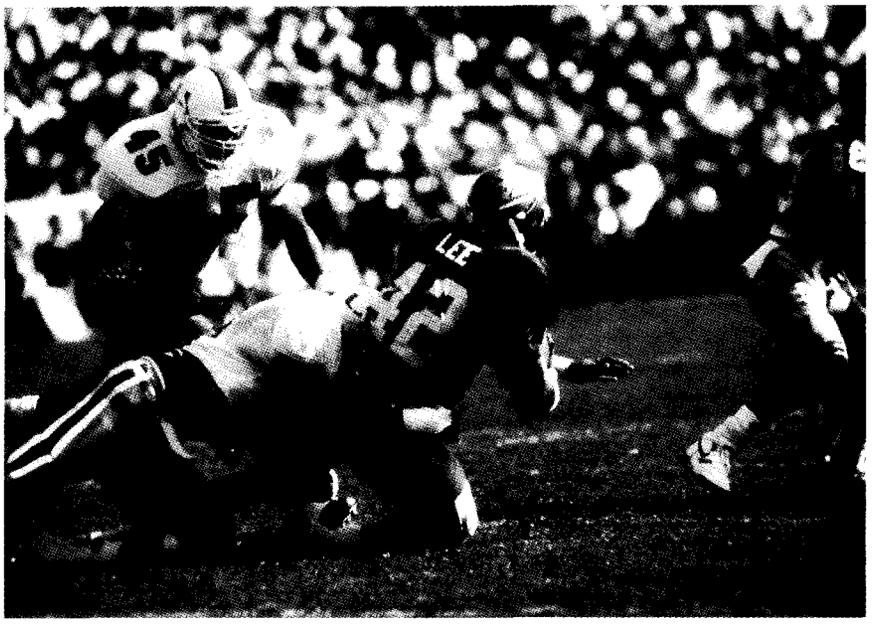
Turning Dreams into Realities



The "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program encourages student athletes to take the lessons learned on the football field today and teach children in the classrooms tomorrow.

Encouraging Student Athletes to Become Teachers

During his three years as nose guard on Louisiana State University's football team, John Mawae came to know the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. But nothing moved him more than working with disabled children in a Special Olympics held at LSU. "Seeing those kids realize their dreams against all odds really got to me," Mawae recalls. "I knew then what I wanted to do: help kids like them realize their dreams."

Mawae will get that chance, thanks in part to the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program created by the College Football Association (CFA) and sponsored by Hitachi, Ltd. Started last academic year, the program awards $335,000 in scholarships at the 67 CFA member universities. At each university, a $5,000 scholarship is awarded to an outstanding senior or graduate student who intends to become a teacher and has participated in the school's football program as a player, trainer, or manager. Mawae, a 1992 scholarship recipient, intends to use his grant to pursue a career teaching kids with special needs.

"Teaching plays an important but undervalued role in society," says Charles M. Neinas, the CFA's executive director. "We'd like to encourage more student athletes to pursue this field, because we think that what they learn on the football field helps to make them effective teachers in the classroom."

Nicole Hagner, a recent University of Pittsburgh graduate, agrees. "Athletics teaches you that it's possible to turn the right dream into a reality through hard work, discipline and teamwork. I'd like to bring that lesson to the classroom," she says. Hagner, who served as a student trainer on Pitt's football team, plans to use her grant to become certified as a high school biology teacher.

Nicole Hagner, University of Pittsburgh graduate and 1992 scholarship recipient.

As college football fans and parents of school-age children, we are proud to be a part of the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program. We hope that it helps more student athletes like John and Nicole to realize their dreams of becoming teachers.

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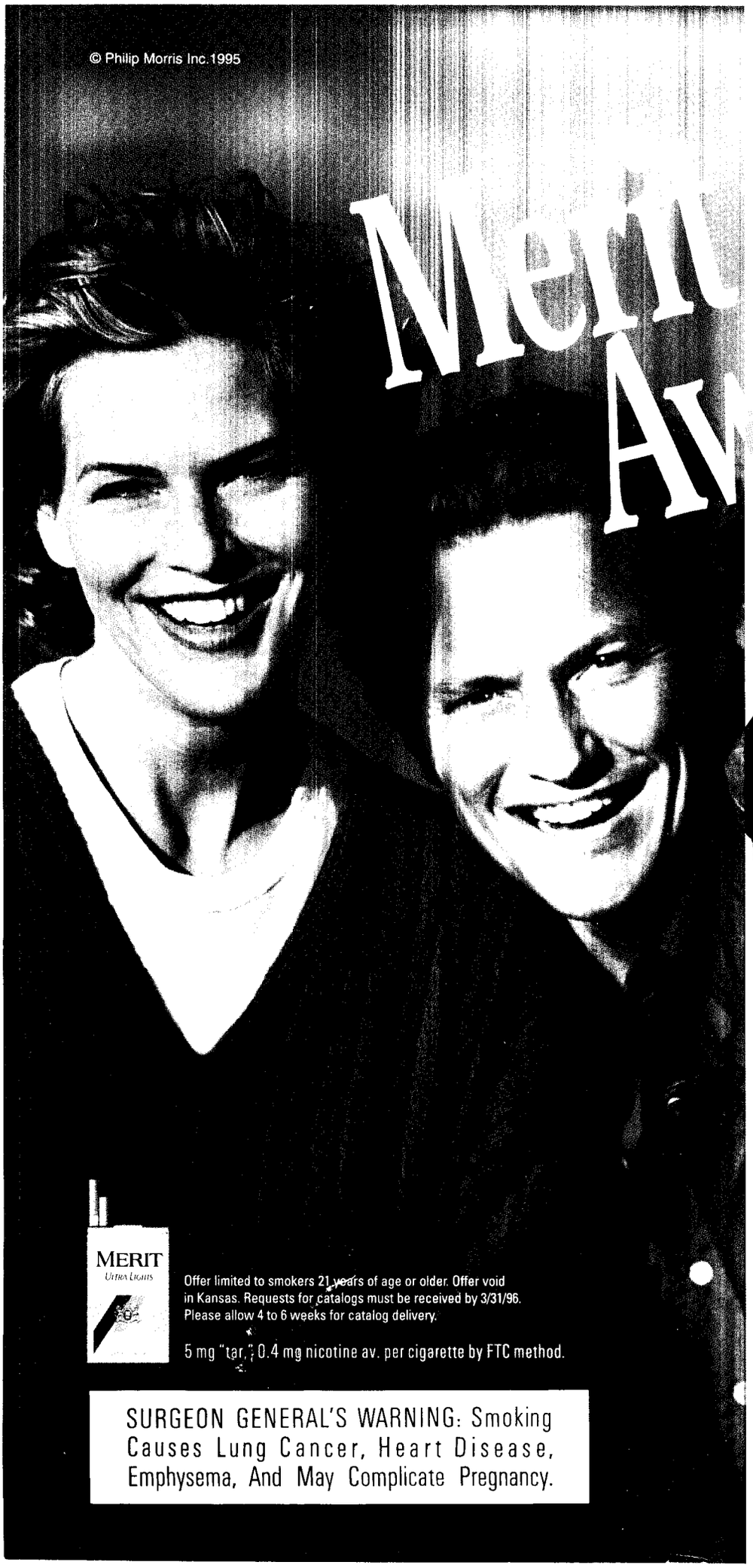
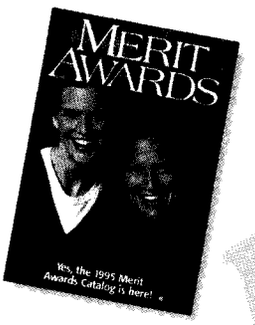


Merit Awards!



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